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Colonel John Gunby of the Maryland Line

3387

Being Some Account of his Contribution to
American Liberty

By A. A. GUNBY
Of the Louisiana Bar

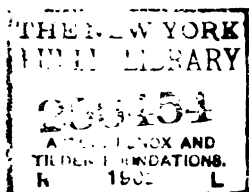


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1902



Gunby
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**PRESS OF THE ROBERT CLARKE
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DEDICATION.

To the Daughters of the American Revolution, whose noble efforts to preserve and brighten the memories of the War of Independence have endeared them to the patriots of all lands, this humble attempt to render honor and justice to one of the founders of American liberty is respectfully dedicated. Its inspiration is the spirit inculcated by all their work :

Love thou thy land with love far-brought
From out the storied Past.

A. A. GUNBY.

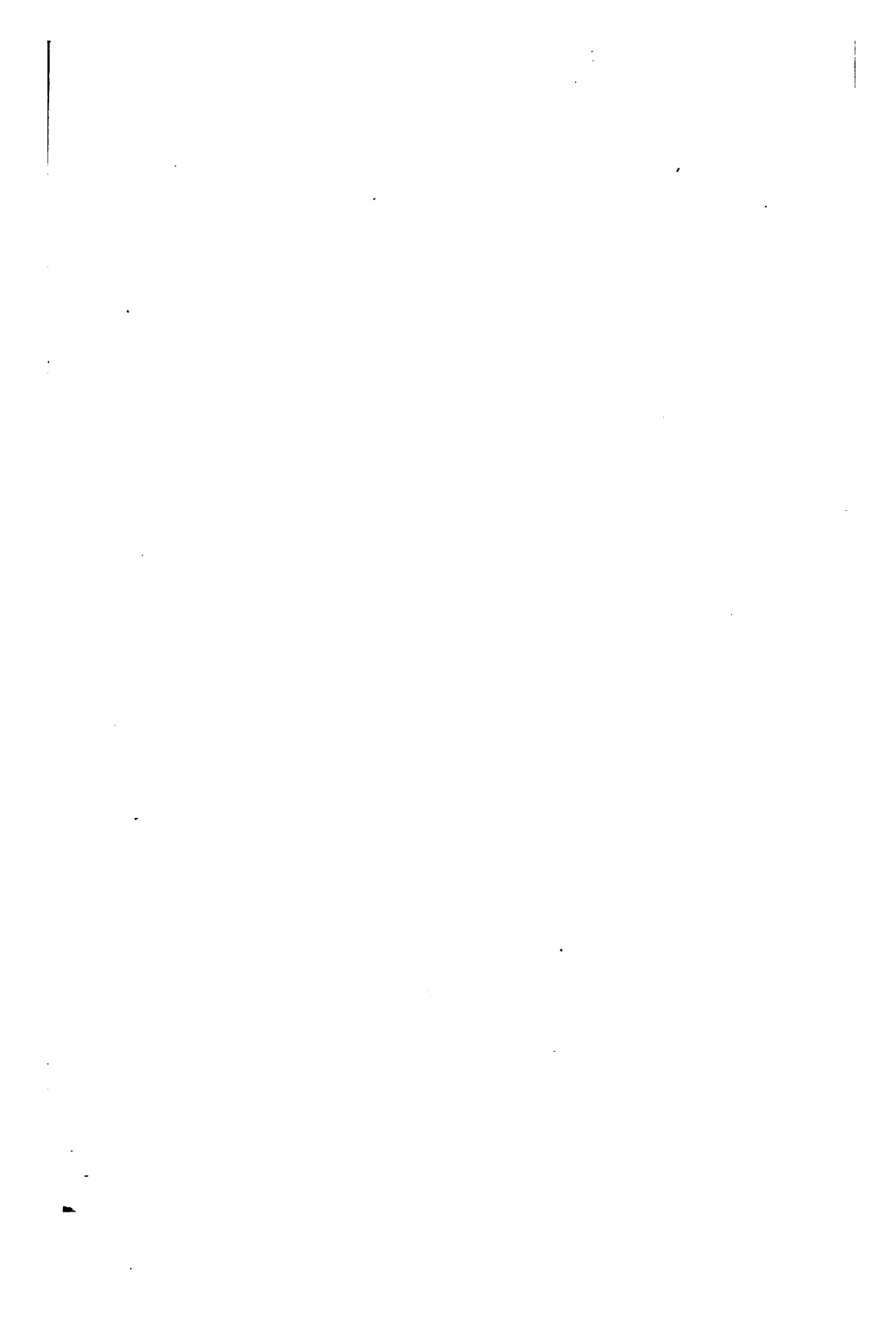
MONROE, LA., *March 28, 1902.*

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Colonel John Gunby of the Maryland Line

CHAPTER I.

THE TRIBUNAL OF HISTORY.

Public sentiment is not always correct. The people are not always right. Contemporary history is as often wrong as right, for it is more or less swayed by the passions, prejudice, party and interest of the writers. But since civilization began, ultimate history has been the great tribunal before which all the actions of men are sifted and final justice is administered to all. Before this august tribunal, Truth always prevails in the end. Men and nations are sometimes misrepresented and misunderstood for centuries. Errors are built up and fortified with seemingly impregnable walls, but sooner or later, some delver after truth digs deep and the whole structure of error falls. One careless or distorted book will be written about a battle, or

a statesman, or a soldier, and its errors and falsehoods and defects will be copied and reiterated by generations, and all sight of the original fact is utterly lost.

But at last, somehow, a student is inspired to look into that particular part of history and the truth is surely evolved, as if by force of some unerring law that directs the sojourn of Humanity on this planet. Opinions are changed, old prejudices are rooted out, blighted reputations are redeemed, and the victims of hoary wrong stand up in bright effulgence in the tribunal of history, the last resort and final depository of triumphant truth.

And in this final resort of justice, those who have received false praise and unmerited honor are unmasked when touched by Truth's Ithuriel spear. It is a bitter doctrine for those who have enjoyed by crime, or fraud, or accident, dignities, honors, and reputations beyond their deserts, that "time at length makes all things even." They do not have to wait for some far-off mysterious, intangible judgment day for a just and truthful award for the deeds done in the flesh; their achievements, characters, motives and impulses are to be impressed, adjusted, passed upon and recorded with the unerring pre-

cision of photography in the final tribunal of history. This is the happy consolation of pure virtue and unselfish loyalty. It is the ultimate survival and triumph of the truth and right that constitutes the greatest incentive and the noblest reward of right living. This cosmic law makes history the most important, as Bancroft says it is the most cheering of all the pursuits of man. In speaking of the chief part of the historian's duty, *Tacitus* says: "It is his to rejudge the conduct of men, that generous actions may be snatched from oblivion, and that the author of pernicious counsels and the perpetrators of evil deeds may see, beforehand, the infamy that awaits them at the tribunal of posterity."

Rightly interpreted, history is always the apotheosis of virtue. And so this great process of historic judging and rejudging must go on in obedience to inexorable natural law until every cause and every character shall receive justice and shine in its true light.

"When the common sense of most shall keep a fretful realm
in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in *universal law*."

Inspired by these sentiments, I have felt constrained to attempt to do justice to a hero of the American Revolution, Colonel John Gunby, of Maryland. He commanded the First regiment of Maryland regulars at the battles of Guilford Courthouse and Hobkirk's Hill, near Camden, South Carolina, and it has become, I might say, fashionable among historians to charge that the Americans lost the day at Hobkirk's Hill owing to the fault or mistake of Colonel Gunby. General Nathaniel Greene, who commanded at Hobkirk's Hill, stated in the heat and excitement of disappointment, that his defeat was caused by Gunby, and careless historians, without investigation, have repeated this charge. Even the renowned Bancroft says, "Gunby *absurdly* ordered the regiment to retire, that they might form again." (Vol. VI., 403.) To show how careless even Bancroft sometimes is, he says that the battle of Hobkirk's Hill took place on April 28, 1781. In a recent work of considerable pretensions, "The Story of the Revolution," by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, the injustice done to Colonel Gunby is more noticeable. Mr. Lodge says (Vol. II., 101) : "In the center, the Marylanders, who had fought so admirably at Guilford, got into confusion in one

company, and then, badly handled by their commander, Colonel Gunby, began to retreat just at the critical moment when they were actually piercing the enemy's line and when Greene thought victory was in his grasp. This sudden and unexpected misfortune compromised the whole position." The same volume, page 102, says: "Saved by his unremitting vigilance from surprise, but defeated in battle by the utterly unexpected blundering of an experienced officer, Greene was sorely depressed by the result of Hobkirk's Hill."

This distinguished writer also, with unaccountable inaccuracy, says that this battle occurred on April 7, 1781.

Historians have not only condemned Colonel Gunby, but have extended their censure to the brave troops commanded by him. For instance, Professor Fiske, in "The American Revolution," Vol. II., pp. 275, 276, says: "The famous Maryland brigade, which in all these Southern campaigns had stood forth pre-eminent like Cæsar's tenth legion—which had been the last to leave the field at Camden, which had overwhelmed Tarleton at the Cowpens, and had so nearly won the day at Guilford—now behaved badly, and, falling into

confusion through a misunderstanding of orders, deranged Greene's masterly plan of battle."

Here it is not so much the commander as the troops that are censured. To remove that censure, to answer all charges against the skill of Colonel Gunby and his men (for there never was any charge against their courage, zeal and activity), is a task worthy of the muse of history. I need not apologize for the treatment of such a subject. The stage on which Colonel Gunby acted was the loftiest in the annals of the world. Nothing concerning the American Revolution can ever appear insignificant in the eyes of mankind. Perhaps it would be out of place for me to attempt to state the supreme importance of that mighty struggle for independence and the freedom of the people against the assumed prerogatives of established government. Yet, in all the great number of eulogists, who have attempted to justly characterize the American Revolution, I do not know of one who has done full justice to the tremendous scope of the subject, or made a sufficiently deep and lasting impression. I do not believe that, even in America, the true significance of the War of Independence is fully comprehended, nor its influence on the world's history fully appre-

ciated. It was not a battle for popular freedom, but for the recognition of the rights of man to self-government. It was the first recognition of man as man, or, as some one has expressed it, the American Revolution was the discovery of man. It not only succeeded in the establishment of freedom in our own country, but it has inspired all other struggles for freedom in all the lands of earth. It was a revolution of ideas and ideals as well as a revolution of government, and it is not too much to say, that in all the struggles yet to come for the perfect attainment and establishment of freedom, happiness, equality and peace among the nations of the earth, it will be the fountain head of every thought and every inspiration, and every high motive that leads to final victory. It is a wonder that the American people do not glory more than they do in the glorious and immortal American Revolution.

Every fact and circumstance concerning it is of the deepest interest. Every participant in it, every soldier who fought its battles, no matter how humble his position, is a hero in American eyes. And, when a soldier took a prominent part in some of the most important, brilliant and influential battles of the Revolution, as Colonel Gunby did, everything

concerning him, his life and character, his valor and achievements, and his just deserts must possess permanent historic value and interest as long as American freedom endures.

It is therefore no trivial or transient subject to which I invite the attention of the intelligent and patriotic reader. If I can show that the strictures on Colonel Gunby and his men are undeserved, that his conduct and the conduct of his men at all times, and especially in the battle of Hobkirk's Hill, deserved, instead of censure, the highest encomiums for coolness and courage and efficiency, I shall perform a service in the cause of historic truth and justice.

CHAPTER II.

THE EASTERN SHORE.

Maryland was one of the smaller colonies, having but a little more than eleven thousand square miles of territory. Yet her situation on the waters of the Chesapeake Bay, the character of her people and the character of her institutions made her one of the most important factors in the struggle for freedom. The three Lords Baltimore, who were devout Roman Catholics, had selected and established Maryland, named for the Spanish Queen of Charles I., as the hospitable and happy refuge of their brethren and co-religionists, who were oppressed by European intolerance. Unfortunately the seating of a Catholic king on the English throne caused the downfall of the Baltimores in their American colony, where the spirit of freedom and independence first asserted itself during the Revolution of 1688, when the people rose and overthrew the Proprietary government, and, once for all, made a Royal province of Maryland. Whatever we may think of the motives of this conflict,

it is well to recognize, even if we cannot estimate, the immense influence which the successful exercise of this new power of revolution had upon the minds of the people, where seeds of independence were sown for the first time.

But the overthrow of the Roman Catholic was far from the triumph of religious freedom in Maryland. It established the ascendancy of the Anglican Church, and religious bigotry began to grow apace, and kept on growing until the Catholics were practically banished from the colony which had been founded by their leaders. They were forbidden to celebrate mass, to hold schools, or teach their principles to the young, or to wear arms in Maryland. Stinging under these wrongs, many colonists had sought shelter in foreign lands, and the Carrolls, the most prominent family in Maryland, were forming the project of founding another colony in Louisiana, just before the Revolution began. Some of these persecuted Maryland Catholics had powerful friends in France, and it was due to their influence, in a large measure, that the French Government, which was intensely Catholic, joined in the war to liberate the American colonies from the power of Great Britain. For this cause all the Catholics of

Maryland and all other discontents from the Anglican Church joined most heartily in the Revolutionary War, and fought side by side, and with equal zeal, with the Puritans of New England.

It thus turned out that Maryland, although the most aristocratic and feudal and pretentious of all the colonies in customs, habits and institutions, yet furnished to the American army some of the most zealous and gallant soldiers, who took a leading part in every signal battle of the Revolution, from Lexington to Yorktown.

From the earliest settlement, Maryland was a rich and prosperous colony. Her citizens possessed all the prestige that flows from wealth, culture and noble manners, and it is difficult to estimate how much these elements of strength contributed to the success of the great struggle in council and in field. One of her poetic sons proudly and properly called her "the battle queen of yore."

Lord Cornwallis was right when he stated to the British Secretary of War that the Chesapeake Bay was the center and keystone of the Revolution. On one side of this bay was the populous and war-like state of Virginia, with its host of superb gentlemen, whose valor, wisdom and patriotism and

fighting qualities have never been surpassed on this earth. On the other side of the Chesapeake was a narrow but fertile peninsula called the Eastern Shore of Maryland, which had already a population of thirty thousand in three counties. Of these three counties the principal one, Somerset, borders the bay, whose waters form a succession of inlets, estuaries, coves and creeks, where pirates and smugglers were wont to hide from the officers of the law until piracy was forever driven away from the colonies. Later these indented shores, these forest protected coves and creeks, afforded a retreat for the American vessels, that carried on a considerable commerce almost in the face of the British. Numerous streams flow through the level lands of Somerset county, and at the time of its settlement it was one vast swamp, densely covered with a luxurious growth of oak, maple, beach, pine, hickory, ash, cedar, walnut, cypress, magnolia and holly trees. These forests sprang from a rich soil of black muck, in which was found the bog iron ore and banks of Indian shells. Some ideas of the difficulties of making a settlement of this tropical swamp may be conceived from the fact that many of the trees had fallen on account of the numerous

storms that prevailed in that region, and their trunks, piled one upon another, had lain for years until they were entirely covered by vegetable mould, broken twigs, dead leaves and gradual accumulations of soil, which formed a surface crust that often broke beneath the weight of the pedestrian, letting him fall six or eight feet before he reached a firm footing. From all this swampy debris, which might be deemed an embryo coal measure, the early settlers hauled out these oak logs, dried them and rove them into an excellent quality of hand-made shingles. In this hardy trade John Gunby dealt for a time.

Here in Somerset county, on Gunby's Creek, six miles from Crisfield, John Gunby was born on March 10, 1745. Gunby's Creek is an inlet of Pocomoke Bay, and is opposite the mouth of the Potomac River. The house in which he was born, a cut of which is herewith presented, taken from an original photograph, was erected, in 1721, by Colonel John Gunby's grandfather, who moved from Queen Anne county to Somerset about 1710. The first Gunbys in America emigrated from Lincolnshire, England, having obtained a grant of land in Queen Anne county from the third Lord Baltimore,

who was at that time very much in favor at the court of Charles II. Tradition says that the family brought with them a coat of arms, and there is still in England a Gunby Park and Manor, showing the noble origin and standing of John Gunby's ancestors. They were thorough loyalists and Church of England men, and noted for energy, probity and determination. Though reserved, quiet, reticent, almost taciturn, they became men of weight and substantial influence wherever they settled. His grandfather and father were both large property holders and leaders in the community. Their wills are herewith presented, as well as the will of Colonel John Gunby, as affording light on the manners, conditions and customs of the time in which he lived. Some of the terms used in the wills indicate the character of the plantations they settled. In the grandfather's will, dated the 24th of October, 1774, one of the testator's tracts of land is designated as "Gunby's Venture;" another is called the "Meadow" (spelled, in the original, Medo). In his father's will, which was passed October 6, 1788, the tracts of land are still more uniquely named: one is called "Middle Ridge;" another, "Chance," "Kirk's Chance," "Flat Cap," and "Slice." The

tract in Worcester county, which was bequeathed to Colonel John Gunby, was called "Security." It is evident that all these lands had been redeemed from the marsh, and we cannot help admiring the hardy spirits, courage and endurance of the stalwart men who redeemed them. The records of both Somerset and Worcester show that the Gunbys were frequent petitioners for the right to drain marsh lands. The execution and record of these wills show that the testators were men of wealth and position. The wills contain inherent evidence of that fact. There is much other evidence to the same effect. The Gunby home stood only a few hundred yards from the waters of the bay, and along the shore in front of it stood large block-houses, which remained in a good state of preservation until 1850. These were used in carrying on an extensive commerce along the coast, extending even so far as South Carolina, in which trade a number of vessels of mean tonnage were owned by Colonel Gunby's father, and he, himself, was interested in this traffic up to the breaking out of the Revolution. One of the principal articles of this commerce was salt, which was made or gathered by letting seawater through ditches dug for that purpose into shallow ponds,

where the water would evaporate, leaving a thick deposit of salt. At the time of the Revolution, and even as late as 1812, this salt sold for twenty dollars (\$20.00) per bushel in Baltimore. The intricacy of the forest and the secret coves and creeks enabled them to carry on the manufacture and sale of salt secure from the inspecting British vessels that guarded the bay, and strictly prevented all trading between the settlers and outsiders.

Here are the three wills referred to, representing three generations of John Gunby. It will be seen that the second will, which is the largest and most interesting, is signed by the testator's mark. This was owing to physical disability, the testator, who was a man of fair education, having died from paralysis.

[COPY.]

COLONEL JOHN GUNBY'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

In the name of God Amen I John Gunby of Worcester County in the State of Maryland being weak and low but of sound disposing mind memory and understanding do make and ordain this instrument of writing to be my last will and testament in manner & form following, to wit :

Imprimis. I give and devise unto my son George

Stevenson Gunby my Plantation whereon I dwell to him his heirs and assigns forever—

Item. It is my will and desire that my Plantation, in Buckingham, should be sold by my Executors, hereinafter named upon such terms as they in their Judgment may think best and upon the purchase money being paid or security to be paid for my said Executors to give a deed or deeds to the purchaser or purchasers of the same. And the money arising from such sale I give and bequeath unto my daughters Nancy & Sally & my son John to be equally divided between them. It is also my will & desire that my son George should have the use of one Thousand Dollars out of the sale of the land provided there is a surplus after educating and maintaining my three children above mentioned upon his paying legal interest for the same till they respectively arrive to age.

Item. After my just debts are paid I give and bequeath the remaining part of my estate of every description to my daughters Nancy & Sally and my son John to be equally divided between them.

Item. I Constitute and appoint my Friend Anthony Bacon Guardian to my Children until my son George arrives at age and upon his arrival at

age it is my will and desire he should have the sole Guardianship of my said Children and it is my earnest wish and desire that my son George should be attentive to the morals and education of my said children and render them every assistance that their tender years may require.

Lastly I constitute and appoint my friend Anthony Bacon and my son George Stevenson Gunby Executors of this my last will and testament revoking and annulling all former wills by me heretofore made ratifying and confirming this and no other to be my last Will & testament.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand & affixed my seal this 11th day of February Anno Domini 1807.

Signed, sealed, published & declared by John Gunby, the above named Testa- tor to be his last will and testament in the pres- ence of us who have subscribed as witnesses thereto.	}	JOHN GUNBY [Seal]
---	---	-------------------

JOHN C. HANDY, JOHN T. TAYLOR, PURNELL TAYLOR.

True Copy. Test.

EDW. P. DAVIS,

Reg. of Wills for Worcester County.

Will of John
Gunby's Grandfather, } [COPY.]
recorded 1744.

JOHN GUNBY'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

In the name of God Amen I John Gunby, being in perfect memory doth ordain this my last will and testament,

Item, I give and bequeath to James Gunby my tract of land called Kirk's purchase to him and his heirs and also Gunby's Venture and also the Medo to him and his heirs.

Item, I give to my loving wife, Sarah Gunby, one-third of all my personal estate. I give to my son Kirk Gunby one Shilling Sterling and give to my daughter Prosillor Gunby one Shilling Sterling. I give to my Daughter Graseannah Lane one Shilling Sterling. I give to my daughter Ardroy Adams one Shilling Sterling. I give to Susannah Taylor one Shilling Sterling.

Item, I give to my grandson James Gunby and my daughter Sarah Gunby and my daughter Ratchell Gunby all the remainder part of my estate. I leave my wife Executrix and James Gunby Executor of this my last Will and Testa-

ment as witness my hand and seal this 24th Day
of October 1744. JOHN GUNBY (Seal)

In the presents of Chas. West, John Horsey, Thos.
Bell, Michael Roach.

Recorded in office of Recorder of Deeds, Princess
Anne, Md.

Will of John
Gunby's Father, }
recorded, 1788. }

[COPY.]

JOHN GUNBY, LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

In the name of God Amen. I John Gunby of
Somerset County in the State of Maryland, Planter,
being sick and weak in body but of sound disposing
mind memory and understanding and considering
the certainty of death and the incertainty of the
time thereof and being desirous to settle my worldly
affairs and thereby be the better prepared to leave
this world when it shall please God to call me
hence, do therefore make and publish this my last
will and testament in manner and form following,
that is to say,

First and principally, I commit my soul into the
hands of Almighty and my body to the earth to be

decently buried at the direction of my Executors hereinafter named and after my debts and funeral charges are paid I devise and bequeath as follows,—

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son Kirk Gunby all land called the middle ridge and also all that tract or parcel of land called Chance and also all my right of all the land or marsh called flatt cap and also a piece of march called Kirk's Chance and also the one-half of my Slice to him and his heirs.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son John Gunby all my lands in Worcester County, known by the name of Security to him and his heirs and assigns forever.

Item, I give and bequeath to my daughter Mary Gunby one cow and calf one ewe and lamb one pewter dish one bason six metal spoons and six pewter plates and also one negro girl called Esther to her and her heirs forever.

Item, I give and bequeath to my son Elisha Gunby one hundred acres of land or marsh on Janes Island to him and his heirs forever.

Item, I give and bequeath to my son David Gunby a negro boy named George to him and his heirs forever.

Item, I leave my negro Wot to be sold and five pounds of the money applied to schooling my son David and the remainder to pay my debts.

Item, If it should happen that my son Kirk Gunby die without lawful issue then all the lands to be the right and title of Elisha Gunby and his heirs forever.

Item, I give to my son Elisha Gunby all my wearing apparel.

Item, I leave all the remaining part of my estate to my beloved wife Sarah Gunby during her life or widowhood.

Item, I give to my daughter Betty Gunby my silver shoe buckles and

Last do I hereby constitute and appoint my son Kirk Gunby to be my whole and sole executor of this my last will and testament revoking and annulling all forever wills by me heretofore made, ratifying and confirming this and none other to be my last will and testament.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this sixth day of October anno Domini seventeen hundred eighty eight.

his
JOHN x GUNBY.
mark

Signed sealed published and declared by John Gunby the above named Testator as and for his last will and testament in the presence of us who at his request and in his presence have subscribed our names as witnesses thereto. John Kellam, Jesse Lankford, Wm. Moore.

CHAPTER III.

THE LOVE OF FREEDOM.

Owing to its conspicuous and favorable situation on the bay and the great extent of the business carried on there, the Gunby Home became the rendezvous of all the neighboring country, and John Gunby had occasion to mingle with the masses of the people and imbibe the love of freedom, which grew everywhere along with popular gatherings and free discussions; although his father and other members of his family were zealous loyalists, he soon became a Presbyterian in religion and a patriot in politics. His father and grandfather were vestrymen in the Anglican Church. His son founded a Presbyterian Church in Worcester county, known as Gunby Memorial. His father was an ardent supporter of the Crown; in other words, a Tory, a name to which a great deal of undeserved odium has been always attached in America. Yet Toryism in principle was nothing but a conservative attachment to the government and institutions of the

Mother country—a sentiment which had grown stronger in strange lands and which we cannot belittle or condemn without at the same time condemning some of the grandest men and women that America produced. This admirable sentiment of loyalty to the king was so strong that it required almost the bitterness of death to break it. All the more, we must admire the heroic manhood of the colonies, which threw off these attachments in the cause of freedom and endured all kinds of pain and suffering rather than endure oppression.

It was a time when the patriots of America put the love of freedom above everything else on earth. To be free and independent was their highest aspiration. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that this pure and disinterested and exalted love of freedom had its first origin and development among men in the American Revolution, and its power and influence over men were simply marvelous. It made them endure all hardships and face all dangers. It made them break the dearest ties and lay down comfort, wealth and the most brilliant prospects. Hunger and pain, fatigue and cold, the terrors of protracted disease and death, itself, were welcomed as a bride by men inspired alone by the

love of freedom. No martyr ever suffered the tortures of the stake for his religion more cheerfully than the American patriots endured their prolonged sufferings for the cause of liberty.

It was such a love of freedom that filled the heart of John Gunby, and caused him to volunteer as a minute-man in the spring of 1775, when he had just reached the age of thirty. Finding that this displeased his father, he returned home to interview his parent, and, if possible, secure his consent and approval of his joining the army. That meeting between father and son was held at midnight in the large family room, and it was witnessed and reported by Elisha Gunby, a nephew of John Gunby, who, having heard that his uncle would be there that night, secreted himself under a large table, determined to hear what was said. He heard Gunby's father say :

"John, if you join the army, you will be hung. I want you to be loyal to the Crown, and in time you will be rewarded."

To this the son replied :

"I am determined to join with the American forces, come what will. We have little to fear, for justice will dominate, and the colonies, as victors,

will live to adopt a crown of freedom, not one of oppression."

Again the father remonstrated, urging him to obey the laws of England. Whereupon Gunby said:

"Your arguments, your entreaties, your commands, will avail of nothing. For me, I would rather sink into a patriot's grave than wear the crown of England."

This ended the conversation, and Gunby left that night to form an independent company at his own expense. He expended all his earthly possessions in equipping this company, which was among the first to be organized, made ready and marched to the front.

The "Maryland Archives" (Vol. 18, p. 20) show that the convention of Maryland elected officers for the Second Independent Maryland Company (Somerset county), on January 2, 1776, as follows: John Gunby, Captain; Uriah Forrest, First Lieutenant; William Brown, Second Lieutenant; Benjamin Brooks, Third Lieutenant.

To the same effect is the following extract from proceedings of Maryland Convention at Annapolis, page 92:

"Sunday, January 14, 1776.

That the forces employed in the land service be entitled to the following rations : Colonel, 6 ; Lieutenant-Colonel, 5 ; Major, 4 ; Captain, 3 ; Subaltern, 2 ; Staff, 2 ; Non-commissioned or private, 1. That the following persons be officers of said forces :
. . . Independent Company Second, John Gunby, Captain."

This extract is cited to show how early our subject took the field, and also as a quaint military item regarding the primitive manner of issuing rations according to the rank of the soldier. Gunby's company was immediately marched to the scene of hostilities. We cannot produce a complete roll of the company, but a partial list is given by the following report made out by Captain Gunby at Cambridge on the 21st of August, 1776. This report is contained in a fragment recently purchased at auction in New York by the Maryland Historical Society, and is appended to Vol. 18 of Maryland Archives. A large number of names have been torn off, but what remains reads as follows :

ROLL OF GUNBY'S COMPANY.

"Second Independent Co. (Somerset Co.) Captain John Gunby.

Mch.	William Matthews,	Sick in barracks.
March 2nd,	John Tull,	Present.
Mch. 4th,	Presley Brewerton,	Sick in barracks.
	Thomas Parramore,	Present.
	Wm. Craig,	Present.
March 8th,	John Corksey,	Present.
March 9th,	Henry Chesney,	Sick in barracks.
	John Reed,	Present.
	Nahemiah Knight,	"
March 12th,	Patrick Phillips,	Sick at Princess Anne.
March 14th,	James Holder,	Deserted 24th June.
March 20th,	Abraham Ervin,	Present.
April 8th,	George Finck,	"
	Henry Clark,	"
April 9th,	John Hilder,	"
	John Chittam,	"
	Wm. Williams,	"
	Phillip King,	"
April 15th,	Johind Gordey,	"
April 15th,	Thomas Figgin,	"
May 1st,	Thomas Adams,	Deserted June 24th.
May 14th,	Johattan Brown,	Present.
May 15th,	Wm. North,	Sick at Princess Anne.
May 22nd,	Elisha Taylor,	Present.
May 28th,	Rich Crane Weatherby,	"
May 29th,	Will Clark,	"
June 12th,	John Mitchell,	Sick at Princess Anne.
June 26th,	Obadiah Summers.	Present.

July 4th,	William Jones,	Deserted 9th inst.
July 15th,	James Townsend,	Discharged 21st inst.
July 26th,	William Stockwell,	Present.
Aug. 1st,	John Dawes,	Sick in barracks.
Aug. 6th,	Richardson Moss,	Present.
Aug. 13th,	Thomas Power,	"

1 Captain.	4 Corporals.	Privates.
3 Lieutenants.	1 Drummer.	62 Infantry.
4 Sergeants.	1 Fife.	10 deserted.
		16 sick.
		1 Discharged.

(Signed) G. DUVAL, *Muster master.*"

"CAMBRIDGE, August 21, 1776.

I hereby certify that the Second Independent Company, under my command, was this day mustered by Chas. Wallace Howard. The above is a true copy of the muster-roll of said Company.

The persons who were not present at said muster were absent for the causes mentioned opposite their respective names in said muster-roll and no other.

JOHN GUNBY."

This muster roll is very interesting as it shows how very irregularly the men were enlisted—one of the greatest difficulties with which the American officers had to contend. It shows that there were 103 men in Gunby's Company, including officers.

The desertions were due in almost every instance to privations, sickness, or want of pay.

It has been impossible for me to discover any detailed account of the services of this company during the years 1776, 1777, 1778, but we know that the Maryland troops fought with special bravery in the battles of Long Island and White Plains in the Fall of 1776. They were also at Trenton and Princeton, at Brandywine and Germantown in the Fall and Winter of '77 and '78, and at Monmouth in 1778. In all these campaigns John Gunby participated first as Captain, then as Lieutenant-Colonel, to which rank he was appointed December 10, 1776, and then as Colonel, to which rank he was promoted on April 17, 1777. There is some confusion in the arrangement of the "Maryland Line" by the General Assembly of Maryland, April 1, 1777, when it was resolved to raise seven battalions by that state. John Gunby appears on the list of officers as Lieutenant-Colonel of the Seventh Maryland Regiment, and on another list of same date he appears as Colonel of Second Maryland Regiment. He was subsequently made Colonel of the First Maryland Regiment, and the change in each case meant a promotion. During his services in the North, Gunby

was a member of five Courts-martial, which are herewith presented :

COURTS-MARTIAL.

I. At a brigade Court-martial, ordered by Brigadier-General McDougal, for the trial of deserters and offenses not capital.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ware, President.

Members.

Captain Hull,	Lieutenant Roxburg,
Captain Pelton,	Lieutenant Strong,
Captain Gunby,	Lieutenant Grant,
Lieutenant Hues,	Lieutenant Sanford,
Lieutenant Jackson,	Lieutenant Gather.

Ensign Fairly, of the late Colonel McDougal's regiment, brought before the court, and accused of taking the fatiguemen off the fatigue, contrary to general orders. The prisoner, being arraigned on the above complaint, pleads and confesses that he marched the fatigue men off contrary to general orders, but that it was the next morning after the orders were issued, and he had not heard them ;

and that he was under the command of Lieutenant Kidd, and that it was by his order that the men marched off. . . .

The court, being cleared, are of the opinion that Ensign Fairly's justification is sufficient, and acquit him on the charge alleged against him.

FRANS. WARE, *President*.

From "Force's American Archives," 5th series, Vol. 2, 1776, pages 1139-40.

II. At a brigade Court-martial, ordered by Brigadier-General McDougal :

Lieutenant-Colonel Ware, *President*.

Members.

Captain Hull,	Lieutenant Roxburg,
Captain Gunby,	Lieutenant Grant,
Captain Pelton,	Lieutenant Sanford,
Lieutenant Blues,	Lieutenant Gaither,
Lieutenant Strong,	Lieutenant Neale,
Lieutenant Jackson,	Ensign Livingston.

Captain Cornelius Hardenbergh, of Colonel Ritzema's regiment, under an arrest, brought before the court, and charges by Lieutenant Lowns-

bury with defrauding his men. The prisoner being arraigned on the above complaints, pleads "Not Guilty." Found Guilty and cashiered.

FRANS. WARE, *President*.

From "Force's American Archives," 5th series, Vol. 2, 1776, page 1140.

III. At a general Court-martial held by order of Major-General Lee, at White Plains, for the trial of such prisoners as shall be brought before them, October 30, 1776.

Colonel Hitchcock, *President*.

Members.

Major S	Captain Thomas,
Captain Thompson,	Lieutenant Clark,
Captain Clark,	Lieutenant Miller,
Captain Olney,	Lieutenant Lord,
Captain Lee,	Lieutenant Grant,
Captain Dodge,	Lieutenant Orne,
Captain Gunby,	Ensign Young.

Captain Peters appointed Judge Advocate in the above court.

Peter Buise, of Captain Caldwell's Company, in Colonel Haslett's Regiment, was brought before the

court, and charged with the crime of desertion ; and being asked whether he was guilty or not guilty of the charge alleged against him, the said prisoner plead guilty, but said that his whole intentions were to go to his wife, who was left in York City when he marched from that place. . . .

The court, having maturely considered the cause before them, are of opinion that the prisoner is guilty of a breach of the first article of war, in the sixth section, and do therefore sentence him to suffer death.

DANIEL HITCHCOCK, *President*.

I do hereby certify that more than two-thirds of the members of the aforesaid court were agreed in the aforesaid sentence.

Attest : ANDREW PETERS, *Judge Advocate*.

IV. Court of inquiry, held at Pompton, July 6, 1777, to inquire into the conduct of the surgeon of the general hospital, Dr. John Cochran.

Colonel Gunby, *President*.

Members.

Captain Thomson,

Captain Holland,

Captain Dorsey,

Captain Windor,

Captain Eccleston,	Captain Griffith,
Lieutenant Wilson,	Lieutenant Smith,
Lieutenant Morris,	Lieutenant Price,
Lieutenant Monahon.	Lieutenant Smith.

Reprimanded.

JOHN GUNBY, *President*.

From "Force's Archives," Vol. 19, No. 1730 (not printed).

V. Court-martial of Richard Ennis, held at Newark, Thursday, July 31, 1777.

Charged with aiding and abetting desertion.

Thomas Price, *President*.

Members.

Colonel Gunby,	Captain Grust,
Colonel Smith,	Captain Dobson,
Major Stewart,	Captain Burns,
Major Forrest,	Captain Dorsey,
Major Taler,	Captain Manbey,

Captain Patten.

The court, having considered the evidence, are unanimously of the opinion that the prisoner is

guilty of the charge, and the sentence is that he shall be hanged until he is dead.

THOMAS PRICE, *President*.

From "Force's Archives," Vol. 19, No. 1712 (not printed)."

The Court-martial at White Plains was held on October 30, 1776, just two days after the battle and the defeat of the Americans at that place, and the severe judgment rendered was no doubt due to that fact. Or, it may have been due to the merciless disposition of General Charles Lee, who ordered the Court-martial. It will be seen that Colonel Gunby presided over an important Court-martial held at Pompton, N. J., July 6, 1777. This is good evidence of his high standing as an officer at that time.

The records examined by me are too meager to give any adequate statement of the services rendered by Colonel Gunby and his men under Washington in New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania. I have never seen any special history of the famous "Maryland Line" which deserves to be more fully commemorated than it has been. When that history comes to be worthily written, it

is certain that John Gunby and his Company and his Regiment will shine as the stars of heaven all through those years of brave fighting, unprecedented for noble endurance and inexpressible suffering and privation from 1776 to 1779.

They were champions of truth and right and freedom, and bought the guerdon of imperishable honor with their blood.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS.

The part which the Southern colonies played in the Revolutionary War has never been adequately set forth by historians. They not only furnished soldiers to aid in every important battle in the North and East, but they fought all the battles of the Southern department with their own men and at their own expense. Virginia was by far the most warlike and the most powerful province engaged in the struggle for independence, and furnished more soldiers and more leaders than any other three colonies. Her pre-eminence cannot be questioned. She responded to every call. Her supplies of munition and men, like her courage and fortitude, never gave out. During the whole war there was fighting South of the Chesapeake Bay as well as North of it. Every year there was a Southern campaign. But this fact did not lessen the large reinforcements, which Virginia and other Southern states supplied to each Northern campaign. In

recognition of this fact, Sir Henry Clinton, as early as 1779, determined to make the South the seat of the war. Lord Cornwallis, the ablest general on the British side, not only concurred in this view, but held that the Chesapeake Bay must be made the seat of war in order for the English to succeed. His idea was based partly on the fact that the British navy could cooperate most effectually with the land forces in the Chesapeake. But it was also based on a true conception of the necessity of overcoming Virginia and her neighboring states before the war could be terminated in favor of the King. Cornwallis was right, but he little thought that the practical attempt to put his idea into effect would expedite the termination of the struggle in favor of American Independence. Such was the result of the surrender at Yorktown, which, itself, was the result of the Southern campaign inaugurated at Camden and the Cowpens, and carried on at Guilford Court House and Hobkirk's Hill and Eutaw Springs. These brilliant Southern battles were the precursors of the grand denouement at Yorktown.

In 1779 and during the early months of 1780, General Lincoln was commander of the Southern

Army. Being hard pressed at Charleston, he appealed to Congress and to Washington for aid. In April, Washington sent General De Kalb with 1,400 Maryland and Delaware soldiers to relieve Lincoln. They started about the 1st of May, but did not reach Petersburg, Va., until the middle of June. It took them one month to descend the Chesapeake in boats or rafts. Lincoln surrendered Charleston, May 12, 1780, so that De Kalb was too late to be of assistance. Congress appointed General Horatio Gates, the hero of Saratoga, to succeed Lincoln in command of the Southern department, and granted him extraordinary powers. He assumed command in July, 1780, and immediately marched into South Carolina, intending to attack the enemy whenever and wherever found. To his surprise, he found that the enemy was also hunting him. They met in the woods near Camden on August 16, 1780, and a battle ensued. The American forces consisted of several regiments of Virginia militia, a similar number of North Carolina militia, and the continental Maryland and Delaware troops under De Kalb. Bancroft calls them brigades, but surely they were no more than two regiments. No sooner had the battle begun, than the Virginia and North Carolina raw troops broke

and fled, and General Gates fled with them. Bancroft, who was not an admirer of Gates, gives an amusing and comical account of his flight, which did not stop until he had covered more than two hundred miles in three days, on horse back. Thus ignominiously deserted by their commander, the Maryland troops, with gallant De Kalb at their head, fought bravely on until they were pressed on all sides by overwhelming numbers and forced to retreat; two-fifths of the Marylanders were killed or wounded in this desperate engagement, and the noble De Kalb was mortally wounded. He lingered for three days, and, before he died, paid a glowing tribute to the valor of the Marylanders, among whom was Gunby's regiment. This was the first battle fought by the Maryland regiment in the South, and they certainly bore off all the honors of the engagement and established their unequalled valor beyond all question.

The inglorious conduct of Gates resulted in his being speedily superseded by General Nathaniel Greene, the hardy Rhode Island warrior, one of Washington's most trusted officers, who was selected for the arduous duties of Southern commander on the earnest recommendation of Washington. I shall have more to say of Greene's

military character and achievements later on ; but it may be said now that he was a patriot of the purest type—that type that made Americans unconquerable by any amount of defeat and discouragement. But General Greene never knew what it was to be discouraged or fatigued or frightened. Another thing may be said of him : his fidelity to Washington was unfaltering and sublime. He was a soldier in spirit, through and through. Greene took command in December, 1780. We shall see that he pushed events rapidly. He had no great army. Most of his men were untrained militia, whose term of service was very uncertain. His troops were badly scattered and still worse supplied with arms, clothing and provisions. He had to encounter every difficulty that necessarily arose from defective government and impoverishment of the people.

But he had a brilliant array of commanders under him—the best the world ever saw until Napoleon appeared on the world's military stage—Morgan, Marion, Sumter, Moultrie, Huger, Henry Lee, William Washington, Harrison, John Gunby, John Howard, Otto Williams, Campbell, Shelby, Hawes, Kirkwood and Ford. Where is

there a brighter military constellation in ancient or modern times? Greene had another inestimable advantage. He had the Maryland veterans, especially the first regiment, commanded by Colonel Gunby, which was the counterpart of Cæsar's Tenth Legion and Napoleon's Old Guard. We shall see that in every fight these Marylanders were Greene's chief reliance, hope and salvation. They bore the heat and the burden of the day in every battle.

Early in January, 1781, General Greene detached four companies from the First Maryland Regiment, and sent them under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Howard to reinforce Morgan, who had a separate force. On January 17th, Morgan fought the famous battle of Cowpens, and was completely victorious. The Maryland troops under Howard were mainly responsible for this victory. They charged with the bayonet at the critical stage of the contest and literally swept the enemy from the field. They charged into the very midst of the Seventy-first British Regiment, and Howard is said to have had seven swords in his hands at one time, surrendered to him by British officers. It was the most decisive victory gained by the

Americans during the whole war, and all historians cheerfully ascribe the chief credit to the Marylanders.

Bancroft says of the Cowpens :

“During a bloody conflict their superiority of numbers enabled the British to gain the flanks of the Americans both on their right and their left. At this moment Morgan ordered the Maryland Line, which shared his own self-possession, to retreat fifty yards and reform anew. The British eagerly pressed on, thinking the day their own, and were within thirty yards of the Americans when the latter halted and turned upon them. The Virginia riflemen, who had kept their place, instinctively formed themselves on the sides of the British, so that they, who two or three minutes before had threatened to turn the Americans, found themselves, as it were, in a pair of open pincers, exposed to the converging oblique fire of two companies of sharp shooters on each flank, and a direct fire from the Marylanders in front. The change was so sudden that the British were stunned with surprise. Seeing their disorder the line of Howard charged with their bayonets and broke their ranks, so that they fled with precipitation. The enemy

was completely routed and pursued for upwards of twenty miles."

John Eager Howard (as quoted in the "National Portrait Gallery," Vol. 2) makes the following statement relative to this maneuver at the Cowpens :

"Seeing that my right flank was exposed to the enemy, I attempted to change the front of Wallace's Company ; in doing it some confusion ensued, and first a part and then the whole of the Company commenced a retreat. The officers along the line seeing this, and supposing that orders had been given for a retreat, faced their men about and moved off. Morgan, who had mostly been with the militia, quickly rode up to me and expressed apprehension of the event ; but I soon removed his fears by pointing to the line and observing that men were not beaten who retreated in that order. He then ordered me to keep with the men until we came to the rising ground near Washington's Horse, and he rode forward to fix upon the most practicable place for us to halt and face about. In a minute we had a perfect line. The enemy were now very near us. Our men commenced a very destructive fire, which they little expected, and a few rounds occasioned

great disorder in their ranks. While in this confusion, I ordered a charge with the bayonet, which was obeyed with great alacrity."

This account differs in some material respects from that of Bancroft, but both agree that the maneuver was executed in substantially the same way and with the same result. It will be important to remember these statements when we come to discuss the battle of Hobkirk's Hill.

CHAPTER V.

GUILFORD COURT HOUSE.

After the battle of the Cowpens, which was as splendid in results as the daring capture of Trenton on Christmas night, 1776, Greene, in order to bring about a juncture of his forces with those under Morgan, made one of the most remarkable, hazardous and successful retreats known to military annals. Having brought his forces together, he gave battle to Cornwallis, March 15, 1781, at Guilford Court House, on ground of his own selection. This was the hardest fought battle of the whole War of Independence. Lord Cornwallis said: "I never saw such fighting since God made me. The Americans fought like demons." Here, again, the Marylanders were the bulwark of the Greene's army and covered the American name with glory. It is needless for me to describe the ground or discuss the plan of battle, which has been set forth in a hundred narratives. Bancroft says that Greene's arrangement of his troops was in direct reverse to

the view of Washington, who always placed his best troops in the front line and held his raw militia in reserve. The latter, he thought, would be encouraged by witnessing the example of the veterans. Greene's plan was just the reverse of this. He formed his troops in three lines of battle, one behind the other. The first line consisted of North Carolina militia. The second line consisted of Virginia militia. The third line was the First and Second Maryland Regiments. Behind this third line he held two regiments of Virginia regulars as reserves. When the battle begun, the expected happened. The first line broke and fled in confusion without a contest. The second line did some better, but this, too, was soon dislodged and routed. When the third line was reached, the real struggle began. Bancroft says: "A fierce attack was made on the Americans' right by Colonel Webster with the left of the British. After a long and bloody encounter the British were beaten back by the Continentals, and with great loss were forced to cross a ravine. Webster himself received wounds which in a few days proved to be mortal.

"The Second Battalion of the guards, led by Colonel Stewart, broke through the Second Maryland

Regiment, captured two field pieces and pursued their advantage into more open ground. Immediately, Lieutenant-Colonel Washington, who had brought his cavalry once more into the field, made a charge upon them with his mounted men; and the First Regiment of Marylanders, led by Gunby and seconded by Howard, engaged with their bayonets. Stewart fell under a blow from Captain Smith, and the British party was driven back with great slaughter and the loss of the cannon which they had taken."

John E. Howard, who was Lieutenant-Colonel in Gunby's regiment and took an active part in this battle, gives the following account of it:

"The Guards (British), after they had defeated General Stephens, pushed into the cleared ground and run at the Second Regiment, which immediately gave way; owing, I believe, in a great measure, to the want of officers and having so many new recruits. The Guards pursued them into our rear, where they took two pieces of artillery. This transaction was in a great measure concealed from the First Regiment by the woods and the unevenness of the ground. But, my station being on the left of the First Regiment and next to the cleared

ground, Captain Gibson, Deputy Adjutant-General, rode to me and informed me that a party of the enemy inferior in numbers to us were pushing through the cleared ground and into our rear, and that, if we would face about and charge them, we might take them. We had been engaged for some time with a part of Webster's brigade, though not hard pressed, and at that time their fire had slackened. I rode to Gunby and gave him the information. He did not hesitate to order the regiment to face about, and we were immediately engaged with the Guards. Our men gave them some well-directed fires, and we then advanced and continued firing. At this time Gunby's horse was shot, and, when I met him some time after, he informed me that his horse fell upon him and it was with difficulty that he extricated himself. Major Anderson was killed about this time. As we advanced, I observed Washington's Horse, and as their movements were quicker than ours, they first charged and broke the enemy. My men followed very quickly, and we passed through the Guards, many of whom had been knocked down by the Horse without being hurt. We took some prisoners, and the whole were in our power. After passing through the Guards, as be-

fore stated, I found myself in the cleared ground, and saw the Seventy-first Regiment near the court house and other columns of the enemy appearing in different directions. Washington's Horse having gone off, I found it necessary to retire, which I did leisurely."

Howard was an eye-witness, and his account is good evidence of Gunby's intrepidity and promptitude of cool and decisive action in the most perilous crisis. Webster and his men were celebrated as invincible fighters. They were in the front of Gunby while the terrible Guards were coming down on his rear. By a fierce, rapid charge, he drives Webster across the ravine, then wheels and faces the oncoming Guards, with Stewart at their head. Another determined charge with shot and bayonet, and this second force was overcome and routed. Gunby was disabled by the death and the fall of his horse, or no doubt he would have disposed of the third column, which caused Howard to retire. The claim of Howard that he suggested to Colonel Gunby the bold maneuvers of this battle, a thing not unusual with narrators of occurrences in which they took a personal share, is not borne out by Johnson, Lee, Marshall and other contemporary writers, who must

have had a personal and intimate knowledge of the event. Marshall, the great jurist, was an able and active officer during six years of the Revolutionary War, and the popularity with all his associates, which his genial and judicious character inspired, made him, perhaps, more widely and more thoroughly acquainted with the officers in the American army than any other man in it. It is said that he settled more disputes in the army than he did on the bench. Judge Marshall, in his "Life of Washington," volume 1, gives the following graphic account of the battle at Guilford Court House :

"The North Carolina militia (who composed the first line) were not encouraged by the great advantages of their position to await the shock, and throwing away their arms and flying through the woods, sought their respective homes.

"The British then advanced on the second line, which received them with more firmness, and maintained their ground for some time with great resolution. Lord Cornwallis, perceiving the corps on his flanks, brought the whole of his reserved infantry into the line. On the right General Leslie brought up the Guards to oppose Lee, and on the left Webster changed his front to the left and attacked

Washington, while the Grenadiers and the Second Battalion of Guards moved forward to occupy the place he had just quitted.

“The ground being unfavorable to the action of horse, Washington had posted Lynch’s riflemen, with whom he remained in person on a height covered with thick woods, and had drawn up his cavalry and continental infantry about one hundred yards in the rear. On being attacked by Webster, the riflemen broke, and Washington, finding it impossible to rally them, rejoined his cavalry. The British continuing to advance, and it being well understood that the militia could not stand the bayonet, General Stephens, who had received a ball in his right thigh, ordered his brigade to retreat. Lawson’s brigade having given away a short time before, the second line was entirely routed, and the enemy advanced boldly on the third.

“The several divisions of the British army had been separated from each other by extending themselves to the right and left in order to encounter the distinct corps that threatened their flanks, and by advancing in regiments at different times, and the different parts of the second line had given

away. The thickness of the woods increased the difficulty of restoring order. They pressed with great eagerness, but with considerable irregularity.

“Greene, in this state of the action, entertained the most sanguine hopes of a complete victory. His continental troops were fresh, in perfect order, and upon the point of engaging the enemy, broken into distinct parts, and probably supposing the severity of the action to be over. This fair prospect was blasted by the conduct of a single corps. The Second Regiment of Marylanders was posted at some distance from the First in open ground, its left forming almost a right angle with the line, so as to present a front to any corps, which might attack on that flank. The British in advancing inclined to the right, and the Second Battalion of the Guards entered the cleared ground immediately after the retreat of Stephens, and rushed on the Second Maryland Regiment, while the First was engaged with Webster. Without waiting to receive the charge, that regiment broke in confusion. By pursuing them, the Guards were thrown into the rear of the First Regiment, from which they were concealed by the unevenness of the ground and by a skirt of woods.

“Greene was himself on the left and witnessed the misfortune without being able to remedy it. His militia being entirely routed, the flight of one-fourth of his continental troops would probably decide the fate of the day. Unwilling to risk his three remaining regiments, only one of which could be safely relied upon, without a man to cover their retreat should the event prove unfortunate, he ordered Colonel Greene, of Virginia, to withdraw his regiment from the line and to take a position in the rear for the purpose of affording a rallying point and of covering the retreat of the two regiments that still continued in the field.

“The Guards were soon called from the pursuit of the Second Maryland Regiment, and led by Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart against the First. About this time, Webster, finding himself overpowered by the First Maryland Regiment, then commanded by Colonel Gunby, and by Kirkwood’s Company and the remaining regiment of Virginia, with whom he was engaged at the same time, had in a great measure withdrawn from the field and retired across a ravine into an adjoining wood. This critical respite enabled Gunby to provide for the danger in his rear. Facing about he met the Guards, and a very ani-

mated fire took place on both sides, during which the Americans continued to advance.

“In this critical moment Lieutenant-Colonel Washington, who was drawn to this part of the field by the vivacity of the fire, made a furious charge upon the Guards and broke their ranks. At this juncture Gunby’s horse was killed under him and the command devolved on Lieutenant-Colonel Howard. The regiment advanced with such rapidity that Gunby could not overtake it, and was within thirty yards of the Guard when they were charged by the cavalry. Almost at the same instant the Maryland infantry rushed upon them with the bayonet, and following the Horse through them were masters of the whole battalion. In passing through it Captain Smith of the infantry killed its commanding officer.

“After passing through the Guards into the open ground, where the second regiment had been originally posted, Howard perceived several British columns with some pieces of artillery. Believing his regiment to be the sole infantry remaining in the field he retreated in good order and brought off some prisoners. The cavalry also retreated.

“About the same time the remaining Virginia

regiment, commanded by Colonel Hawes and Kirkwood's Company, who were still engaged with Webster, were directed by General Greene to retreat. The artillery was unavoidably abandoned—the horses which drew the pieces being killed and the woods too thick to admit of their being dragged elsewhere than along the great road. The retreat was made in good order, and Greene himself brought up the rear."

I have quoted these accounts of the battle at Guilford Court House for several reasons. In the first place they show that the First Maryland Regiment, which had been organized, disciplined and commanded by Colonel John Gunby, carried off the honors of the day, as it did at the Cowpens, and in every battle fought by Greene in the Carolinas. It is an axiom of military affairs that a company of soldiers is what its captain makes it. The same rule applies to a regiment. Its spirit, its courage, its discipline, its coolness, its endurance, its efficiency, every way are the exact reflex of the qualities and character of its commanding officer. The First Maryland Regiment could not have been what it was, the Tenth Legion of the American Army, if

its Colonel had not been a brave and able leader, every inch a soldier.

In the next place, the battle at Guilford Court House shows that the First Maryland Regiment was not only brave and well disciplined, but cool and incapable of panic in the presence of any perils. Just think of the situation at the time Gunby ordered his regiment to about face and charge the victorious Guards! The first and second lines of battles had been shattered. The Second Maryland Regiment had fled in confusion. Washington's cavalry had not yet come in sight. The Virginia reserves had already been ordered by General Greene to withdraw. The commanding General himself was not to be seen. In such a crisis military genius was required, a mind quick to perceive, a soul prompt and resolute to act and execute. Gunby saw the danger, comprehended the remedy, and took the responsibility. His men answered the call made upon their valor, and made a charge which has never been surpassed in all the annals of war. The charge at Balaklava did not equal that at Guilford Court House in supreme devotion and disciplined courage. No wonder Cornwallis said that they fought like demons.

No wonder that Fox said in Parliament that another victory like that at Guilford would destroy the British army. The Marylanders routed Webster's command, and mortally wounded their commander. The Marylanders routed the Guards and killed their commander. It was due to the fighting of the Marylanders that the British were so disabled that their victory was worse than barren, in fact, bore all the marks and was followed by all the results of a defeat. Instead of advancing the British retreated. Instead of remaining or seeking to renew hostilities the victors sought to avoid another engagement, and Cornwallis made up his mind to abandon the Carolinas, where he had gained nothing, and had met with so many serious disappointments and disasters, and to march into Virginia to join the Royal forces on the James. So he began the movement that had its fatal ending at Yorktown.

Such was the mighty result of American valor at Guilford Court House, and, as long as time shall last, a splendid share in the glory of it all belongs to the First Maryland Regiment and its gallant commander, Colonel John Gunby.

Another thing is demonstrated by the true facts of

this battle. It is the peculiar weakness of Greene as a commander. I would not detract one iota from the merited honors of this great man. He was brave and humane; he was judicious, and, above all, faithful. But he had no element of military genius. He had scarcely a shallow knowledge of military science and tactics. He was laborious and careful in preparation, but always weak at the critical moment. This made his career, as far as it depended on decisive actions, a succession of blunders and defeat. He was unquestionably responsible for the loss of Fort Washington after the battle of White Plains. He was inexcusably tardy at Germantown, and thereby thwarted the plans of Washington.

He never gained a decisive victory in the South. He was not at the Cowpens. If he had been there, it is not unreasonable to fear the day would have been lost. At Fort Mifflin, in June, 1777, he filled the ditches with his sacrificed soldiers, and then ordered a retreat. At Red Bank, in September, 1777, after having routed the enemy and swept the field with Maryland bayonets, he suffered the enemy to take possession of the fortified position, ordered a useless charge, was repulsed, and

again ordered a retreat, and left the field, which his men had so gloriously won in the morning, in possession of the enemy in the evening.

After the defeat at Ninety-six, he is said to have been very low-spirited, almost crushed, and complained of his bitter fate, that would never let victory perch on his banners. But his low spirits never lasted long. He correctly represents himself in a letter as a man who would "fight, get defeated, and then fight again." He had bull-dog tenacity. He had the instincts and methods of the blacksmith, from whom he was descended, who hammered iron into shape, not by skill, but by sheer force and repetition of blows.

He had another fault as a General; he was always over-confident at the start. Yet he worried himself out with attention to petty details. Bancroft says that General Greene was worn out with fatigue and watching before the battle began at Guilford, and, after the battle, fainted from extreme exhaustion, and, after regaining consciousness, remained far from well. It was this indisposition to leave details to his subordinate officers that caused General Harry Lee to retire from the army on account of Greene's unfairness toward his officers and

his habit of censuring them. Yet Greene testified that Lee was the most accomplished and ablest officer under his command.

This failing also had the effect of causing Greene to lose confidence as quickly as he conceived it. While he went into an engagement with much confidence, he was too ready to retire before the slightest reverse. This was clearly shown at Guilford Court House. He didn't appreciate the fighting qualities and strength of Gunby's men, and rather than bring all his men into action, which would have overwhelmed the enemy, he ordered a retreat, because, from his position on the field, he did not know what splendid work the Marylanders had done. This clearly appears from the following extract from General Moultrie's admirable work, "American Revolution in Carolina and Georgia" (Vol. 2, p. 269).

"The cavalry under Colonel Washington, supported by the Maryland troops, commanded by Colonel Gunby and Colonel Howard, made such a charge that they rode down the whole regiment of Guards, in which a great many of their officers and men were killed and wounded. This heavy charge being well supported by the infantry, obliged

the British to fall back, and when General Huger received orders to retreat, the Americans were pressing close upon them."

We shall see that he fell into the same error at Hobkirk's Hill, and ordered a retreat before it was necessary, when, in fact, a little persistence and firmness would have secured a signal victory. Yet he went into that battle with almost overweening confidence, which, however, was speedily replaced by overcaution as soon as the first reverse appeared. This may have been best suited to the conditions that surrounded Greene, but it is unlike the conduct of any great military commander in history. They have all had the temerity on occasions to burn their bridges behind them. Greene never did. His whole system of tactics seemed to be embodied in the self-evident proposition that "he, who fights and runs away, will live to fight another day." The difference between Washington and Greene as commanders on the battlefield may be well illustrated by a comparison of their respective conduct at Monmouth and at Guilford Court House. We have seen that Greene ordered a retreat when his militia broke without even bringing all his regulars into action.

But at Monmouth, Washington met his men in full retreat, in much disorder, and while Charles Lee sat idly on his horse and ridiculed the idea that the Americans could withstand the invincible British, Washington rallied his men and caused them to confront the enemy and check his victorious advance. This was, indeed, military genius of the brightest order. It was on a grander scale, but the same order of conduct as that of Colonel Gunby, when he right faced his men at Guilford Court House and hurled them at the advancing foe in the rear.

It will not be denied that Greene possessed some of the qualities of a great and good general. While he was a good disciplinarian, yet he shared the toils and perils and hardships of his men. He was never afraid of soiling his hands with work. He endured the rain and the cold and the prolonged marches, and lived on the same scanty fare that was given to his men.

Above all, he loved his country and was true to the cause of freedom and its great chieftain, George Washington.

Yet the verdict of impartial history must be that the peculiar faults of Greene prevented the Ameri-

can victory at Guilford Court House from being decisive and overwhelming; and the glorious honors won by the Americans on that occasion, when for the first and only time during the Revolutionary War, American regulars met an equal number of British regulars in open field and routed and drove them back, belong to gallant John Gunby and his brave Marylanders.

CHAPTER VI.

HOBKIRK'S HILL.

Of the four thousand five hundred Americans who fought at Guilford, Virginia furnished sixteen hundred and ninety-three of her militia and seven hundred and seventy-eight of her continental troops. Those reinforcements were sent to Greene at a time when Benedict Arnold was invading Virginia and threatening its capital. These facts confirmed Cornwallis in the conviction that the powerful province of Virginia was the backbone of the war, and he promptly determined to direct his efforts to overcoming Virginia, marching northward from the vicinity of the battlefield.

General Greene did not deem it necessary or advisable to follow Cornwallis; so he marched south with the intention of attacking and capturing the British posts in South Carolina, and, if possible, driving the enemy into Charleston. After marching about 150 miles, on the 19th of April, 1781, Greene drew his army up in front of Camden, the

principal of these British posts, lying near the center of the state, about one hundred miles to the northwest of Charleston. By taking this important point the Americans would become masters of the entire state outside of Charleston. Camden was the scene of Gates's inglorious defeat the previous year, and this may have had some influence in the decision to attack it first. Greene had hoped to surprise the garrison, but in this he was disappointed. The British commander, Lord Rawdon, although but twenty-six years of age, was a most able, vigilant and daring officer. He learned of Greene's approach some time before the latter arrived and was ready at all points to repel the attack. Finding an assault impracticable, Greene retired north of the town and camped on a low sandy ridge called Hobkirk's Hill, on both sides of the Great Waxhaw road. This ridge would hardly be called a hill in any but a level country. Its highest point, about one mile and a quarter from the center of the town of Camden, is only seventy feet above the level of the town. This ridge or knoll extends from east to west about one thousand yards. At the time of the battle it was covered with thick and uninterrupted woods, and

on its east was the low marshy swamp of Pine-tree Creek. Here Greene remained one night, and on the 20th marched across the swamp and camped east of Camden on the Charleston road in order to intercept Colonel Watson, who was supposed to be marching to the relief of Rawdon. Before making this last movement Greene, finding it difficult to carry the artillery across the swamps, had detached Colonel Carrington with the North Carolina militia to remove the artillery to a place of safety and guard it until further orders.

On the 24th, Greene returned with his army to Hobkirk's Hill, and sent word for the artillery to be brought back, but only two pieces had been returned on the morning of the 25th.

I shall now give a description of the battle in the words of Chief-Justice Marshall in his "Life of Washington," Vol. II, page 5 :

"A drummer, who deserted on the morning after Greene's return, and before he was rejoined by Lieutenant-Colonel Carrington, gave information to Lord Rawdon that the artillery and militia had been detached.

"His lordship determined to seize this favorable occasion for fighting his enemy to advantage, and,

at the head of nine hundred men, marched out of town on the morning of the 25th to attack the American army. Lieutenant-Colonel Carrington had arrived in camp that morning and brought with him a supply of provisions, which had been issued to the troops, some of whom were employed in cooking and others in washing their clothes. Notwithstanding these occupations, they were in reach of their arms and were in readiness to take their ground and engage at a moment's warning. By keeping close to the swamp and making a circuit of some distance, Lord Rawdon gained the American left without being perceived; and about eleven his approach was announced by the fire of the advance pickets, who were a half mile in front of Greene's encampment. Orders were immediately given to form the American line of battle.

“The Virginia brigade, commanded by Colonel Huger, consisting of two regiments under Campbell and Hawes, was drawn up on the right of the great road. The Maryland brigade, commanded by Colonel Williams, consisting also of two regiments under Gunby and Ford, was on the left, and the artillery was placed in the center. The North Carolina regiment, under Colonel Reed, formed a

second line, and Captain Kirkwood, with the light infantry, was placed in front for the purpose of supporting the pickets and retarding the advance of the enemy. General Greene remained on the right with Campbell's regiment.

"Captain Morgan, of Virginia, and Captain Benson, of Maryland, who commanded the pickets, gave the enemy a warm reception, but were soon compelled to retire. Captain Kirkwood was driven in and the British appeared in view. Rawdon continued his march through the wood along the low ground in front of the Maryland brigade, which was in the act of forming, until he reached the road where he displayed his column.

"Perceiving that the British advanced with a narrow front, Greene ordered Colonel Ford, whose regiment was on the extreme left, and Lieut.-Col. Campbell, whose regiment was on the extreme right, severally to attack their flanks, while Gunby and Hawes should advance upon their front with charge bayonets. To complete their destruction by cutting off their retreat to the town, Lieutenant-Colonel Washington was ordered to pass their left flank and charge them in the rear.

"The regiments commanded by Ford and Camp-

bell, being composed chiefly of new levies, did not change their ground and perform the evolution necessary for the duty assigned to them with the requisite rapidity and precision ; in consequence of which, Rawdon, who instantly perceived the danger that threatened his flanks, had time to extend his front by bringing the volunteers of Ireland into his line.

“This judicious movement disconcerted the design on his flanks and brought the two armies into action fronting each other. But the regiments of Ford and Campbell were thrown into some confusion by the abortive attempt to gain the flanks of the British. Colonel Washington, too, was compelled by the thick underwood and felled trees, which obstructed his direct course, to make so extensive a circuit that he came into the rear of the British at a greater distance from the scene of action than was intended, in consequence of which he fell in with their medical and other staff, and with a number of the followers of the army and idle spectators, who took no part in the action. Too humane to cut his way through this crowd, he employed so much time taking their verbal parole that he could not reach the rear of the British line

until the battle was ended. *These casualties disappointed this very interesting part of Greene's intended operations.* The artillery, however, played on the enemy with considerable effect, and the regiments of Gunby and Hawes advanced on the British front with resolution. Some companies on the right of the Maryland regiment returned the fire of the enemy, and their example was followed by the others. Notwithstanding this departure from orders, they continued to advance with intrepidity, and Greene entertained sanguine hopes of victory. His prospects were blasted by one of those incidents, against which military prudence can make no provision.

“Captain Beatty, who commanded on the right of Gunby's regiment, was killed, upon which his company, with that adjoining it, got into confusion and dropped out of the line. Gunby ordered the other companies, which were still advancing, to fall back and form with the two companies behind the hill, which the British were ascending. This retrograde movement was taken for a retreat, and the regiment gave way. Encouraged by this circumstance, the British pressed forward with increased ardor, and all the efforts of Colonel Williams and of Gunby

and Howard to rally the regiment were for a time ineffective. This distinguished regiment, distinguished alike for its discipline and courage, which, with the cavalry of Washington, had won the battle of Cowpens and nearly won that of Guilford Court House, was seized with an unaccountable panic, which for a time resisted all the efforts of their officers.

“The flight of the First Maryland Regiment increased the confusion which the change of ground had produced in the Second, and, in attempting to restore order, Colonel Ford was mortally wounded. Lord Rawdon improved these advantages to the utmost. His right gained the summit of the hill, forced the artillery to retire, and turned the flank of the Second Virginia Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Hawes, which had advanced some distance down the hill. By this time the First Virginia Regiment, which Greene had endeavored to lead in person against the left flank of the British, being also in some disorder, began to give ground. Perceiving this reverse in his affairs, and knowing that he could not rely on his second line, Greene thought it most advisable to secure himself from the hazard of a total defeat by

withdrawing the Second Virginia Regiment from action.

“The Maryland Brigade was in part rallied, but Lord Rawdon had gained the hill, and it was thought too late to retrieve the fortunes of the day. *Greene determined to reserve his troops for a more auspicious moment, and ordered a retreat.*

“Finding that the infantry had retreated, Colonel Washington also retired, with a loss of only three men, bringing with him about fifty prisoners, among whom were all the surgeons belonging to the British army.

“The Americans retreated in good order about four miles from the field of battle, and proceeded next day to Rugeley's Mill. The pursuit was continued for about three miles. In the course of it, some sharp skirmishing took place, which was terminated by a vigorous charge made by Colonel Washington on a corps of British Horse who led their van. This corps being broken and closely pursued, the infantry in its rear retreated precipitately to Camden.”

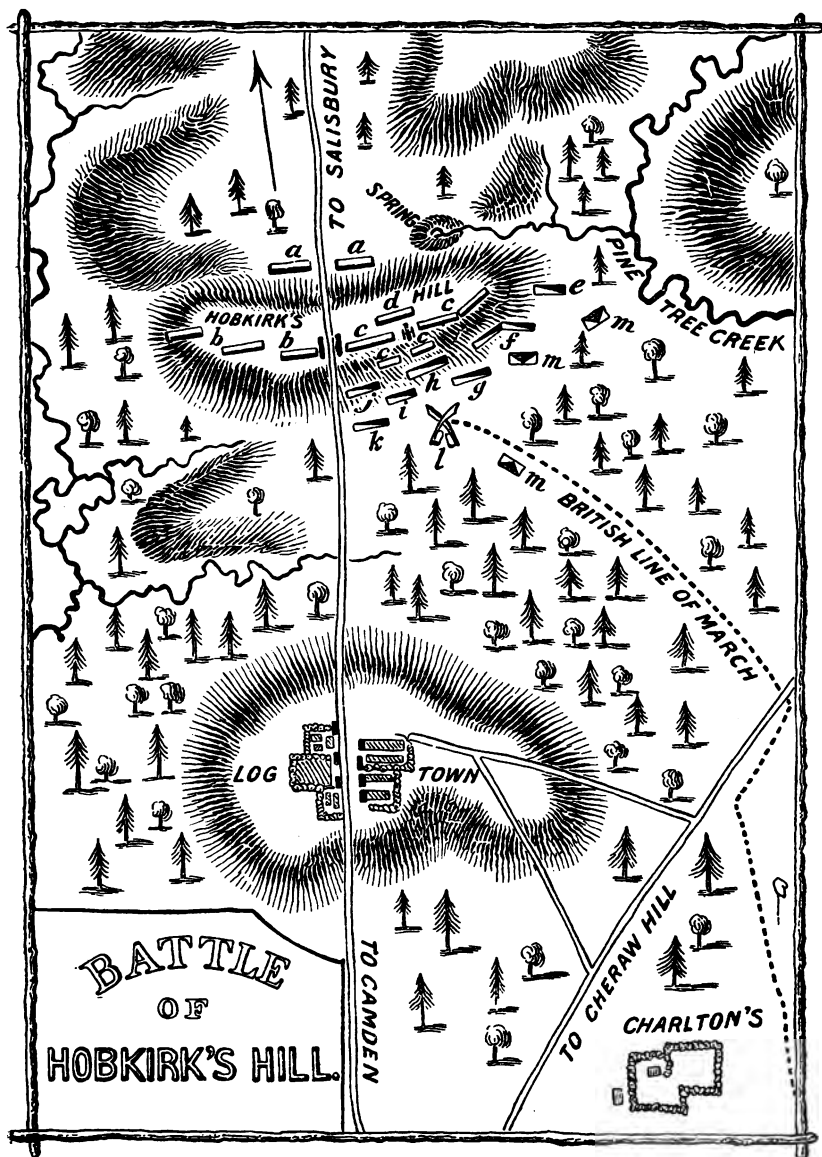
I have given this account of the battle in full because it is necessary to examine very closely into all the details of this battle in order to determine the

exact cause and responsibility for the defeat of the Americans. It will be seen that Marshall attributes no blame whatever to Colonel Gunby, but says Greene's "prospects were blasted by one of those incidents against which military prudence can make no provision." But he seems to attach blame to the First Maryland Regiment, speaking of its "flight," and saying it was "seized with an unaccountable panic which for the time resisted all efforts of their officers."

I shall produce conclusive evidence that there was no "flight," and no "panic," and that the defeat, or rather retreat, for I do not admit that the American forces were defeated, was due to the errors which could have been foreseen and easily avoided by ordinary military prudence, and that Gunby was not to blame. In order to understand the battleground I herewith present a sketch drawn by one of the British officers, who participated in the battle as a member of Rawdon's regiment of Irish volunteers, and first published by the British historian Stedman.

Lossing and other historians have made use of the same map, and it is substantially correct as to the general topography of the field and the posi-





tion of the troops, but it is not complete. The memoranda on the map are those made by Captain Vallancey, and are as follows: "*a-a* are American militia on the Waxhaw road leading from Camden to Salisbury; *b-b*, the Virginia line; *c-c*, the Maryland line; *d*, the reserve with whom was General Greene; *e*, the British light infantry, approaching the rear of the American camp from the swamp of Pine-tree Creek; *f*, Irish Volunteers from New York; *g*, South Carolina Loyalists under Rawdon; *h*, Sixty-third British Regiment; *i*, New York Loyalists; *j*, King's American Regiment; *k*, Convalescents; *l*, place where first attack was made; *m-m*, British Dragoons." (Taken from "Lossing's Field-book of American Revolution.")

It will be seen that the Maryland line is given an advanced position with the British right, infantry, dragoons, and a part of the Irish Volunteers, beyond their left flank. The American troops on the right, where Greene was, have no British in front of them, and are not represented as far to the front. The facts are that some of the troops on the British right were advanced further than represented on this map. Both the light infantry and dragoons of the British had reached the rear

of the American left after a circuitous march from Camden through the swamps, and then ascending the branch at the head of which the Americans were camped at Martin's Spring. This spring is now known as Greene's Spring, and a view of it is herewith given. This spring is half way up the slope of Hobkirk's Hill on the side next to the swamp on Pine-tree Creek. The soldiers of Greene were washing their clothes at this spring and cooking their breakfast near by when the British appeared on their flank and rear. It seems that there were no pickets on the side next to the swamp. Rawdon had marched the main body of his men down the road, and when the Marylanders formed and advanced they were really between the two lines, as they had been at Guilford Court House. The British light infantry on the left rear of the Americans were in sight of the British regulars in front and the Irish Volunteers on the left also; and all those forces made a rush to join each other. It will be seen from the map that none of the British forces are in front of the Virginia line on the American right. It is clear that they were not in a position to support the Marylanders, who had all the fighting to do, as usual. At the time of the



GIBBENS'S SPRING.

Off to right of this picture are the woods. Picture shows road leading from Camden. The horseman is almost on crest of Hobkirk. The scene shows where Gunby and the Maryland line broke, and where the path verges on the road where Beatty is said to have fallen. Rawdon came up this road to co-operate with forces supposed by that time to be on the other side of the hill. When at this point the English caught sight of the other section of army, and, supposing they had been trapped, made a grand rush to join forces, which they did in field to right.



GREENE'S SPRING.

Here it was that Kirkwood's Delawares were camped, which is at head of first fork of the run mentioned by deserter and mistaken by the British as the second. This is the scene of the first fighting, and is located on the eastern slope of Hobkirk, about half way up. Here it was that many men were washing their clothes, etc.

battle this ground was covered with forest trees, and the land below the hill was quite marshy, as it still is in the spring time.

Let us also take into consideration that the American troops had been worn out by long marches and severe privations, and had just received two days' scanty rations, which they were preparing to eat when the British made their appearance; that they had been seeking to draw the British out of their fortifications, and had for several days been marching around Camden with the idea of besieging or assaulting the British position, and we can realize that the Americans did not expect an open attack from their enemies. It was the last thing in the world they expected. The attack was a complete surprise, and it is so recorded in Washington's diary. "So little did the Americans expect the British out of their lines, that the second in command, General Huger, told me that they had just come to their ground, and that a number of officers, with himself, were washing their feet and a number of soldiers were washing their kettles in a small rivulet that ran by this camp, when their picket was engaged with the enemy. They ran to camp as fast as they could, and the British were soon

after them, when a general action took place, and it would probably have been a serious surprise upon General Greene had it not been for Washington's cavalry, which was saddled and only the bits of their bridles out of their mouths. They were soon got ready, and General Greene ordered them to charge the enemy's right flank, which they did, and soon got into their rear; this threw them into the greatest confusion, and gave General Greene time to make a good retreat to Gum Swamp, about five miles away." (Moultrie's "American Revolution in Carolina and Georgia," Vol. 2, p. 276.)

General Moultrie is certainly good authority on this subject. He was a prisoner in Jamaica at the time of the battle at Hobkirk's Hill, having surrendered at Charleston the preceding year, but he was personally acquainted with all of the officers and most of the men who participated in that engagement, and he prepared his "Memoirs" in consultation with the principal actors in the struggle.

There is plenty of other contemporary evidence, both from British and American sources, to confirm the conclusion that General Greene was taken by surprise, and that he acted both before and during

the battle with imprudence and inconsiderate confidence. (See "Tarleton's Campaigns.")

Yet General Greene always attributed the loss of the battle exclusively to the order of Colonel Gunby to his regiment to fall back and reform on the two disordered companies, and many historians have charged Gunby with "blundering," and his regiment with having acted badly. As a sample, take the following from Fiske's "The American Revolution," Vol. 2, p. 275 :

"The famous Maryland brigade, which in all those Southern campaigns had stood forth pre-eminent like Cæsar's tenth legion—which had been the last to leave the disastrous field at Camden, which had overwhelmed Tarleton at the Cowpens, and had so nearly won the day at Guilford, now behaved badly, and, falling into confusion through the misunderstanding of orders, deranged Greene's masterly plan of battle."

Here we see that Professor Fiske, like Judge Marshall, shows no disposition to censure Colonel Gunby's orders, but says they were misunderstood, and places the censure on the soldiers of the First Maryland Regiment. This, I shall show, is inexcusable error and injustice. Neither Colonel Gunby

nor his men were to blame for the failure to gain a decisive victory at Hobkirk's Hill. Let us see what General Greene says about the causes of his defeat, and then I shall lay before the reader what others have said on the subject, to be followed by a comparison and some discussion of these authorities.

The next day after the battle, Greene, in general orders, commended the exertions of several corps, but implicitly and by silence censured the infantry of the battalions. (Gordon's "History of the United States," Vol. 4, p. 85.)

"April 25, 1781.

"Much dissatisfaction is expressed by the General with the conduct of the officers, but we (the soldiers) are loaded with honor." (Moore's "Diary of the American Revolution," Vol. 2, p. 415.)

On April 27, 1781, two days after the battle, General Greene addressed a report of the engagement dated at Saunder's Creek to Samuel Huntingdon, Esq., who was at that time president of the Congress at Philadelphia, and in this report, General Greene says :

"About eleven o'clock our advanced pickets received the first fire of the enemy. Colonel Gunby, with the First Maryland Regiment, and Lieutenant-Colonel Hawes, with the Second Virginia Regiment, had orders to advance down the hill and charge them in front. The enemy were staggered in all quarters, and upon the left were retiring when, unfortunately, two companies on the right of the First Maryland Regiment were entirely thrown into disorder, and by another stroke of fortune, Colonel Gunby ordered the rest of the regiment, which was advancing, to take a new position toward the rear, where the two companies were rallied. This movement gave the whole regiment an idea of retreat, which soon spread through the Second Regiment, which retreated accordingly. They both rallied afterwards, but it was too late. The troops rallied more than once, but the disorder was too general and struck too deep for one to think of recovering the fortune of the day, which promised us at the outset such a complete victory. I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect,

Your Excellency's most obedient and
most humble servant,

NATL. GREENE."

“P. S.—The cavalry and a part of the infantry charged the enemy in the dusk of the evening and made them fly with precipitation into the town.”

This is certainly a most remarkable postscript to the official report of a battle represented to have been lost. However, there is indubitable evidence that it is true, and it is truly strange that Greene seemed disposed to subordinate or depreciate the fact that at sunset the battlefield was in the possession of the American forces and remained so during the night, notwithstanding the commanding General was five miles away with his retreating army. In fact, there is a singular resemblance in the conduct of General Greene to that of Gates on nearly the same battleground. Both were surprised, both were too ready to accept defeat, and both left before the fight was finished. On the 28th of April, three days after the battle, Greene wrote to Major Henry Lee, who had been detached before the battle of Hobkirk's Hill to reduce Fort Watson, and gave the following account of that battle:

“The First Maryland Regiment being a little disordered had orders to retire *a few rods*. This threw them into disorder. The Second Maryland





POSITION OF RESERVES WHEN AMERICANS BROKE.
Road is a branch of Camden Road and starts about fifty yards from base of hill. To the right is original position of Maryland line upon forming. This scene is taken from crest of Hobkirk looking southeast and on left of Camden Road leaving that town.

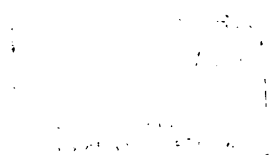
Regiment, seeing them fall back, soon got into disorder also, and the whole retired off the ground. This encouraged the enemy, who before were retiring, and they pushed on and gained the top of the hill and the artillery was obliged to retreat. Colonel Hawes's regiment was then advancing in tolerable order within forty yards of the enemy, and they in confusion in front, but the enemy having gained their flank by the retreat of the Marylanders, I was obliged to order them to retire also, to save them from being cut to pieces. I was with this regiment myself, and they suffered more than all the rest. Colonel Campbell's regiment got disordered about the same time that the Maryland troops did, but by his exertions and Captain Pierce's, my aid, they were soon rallied, and the whole of the troops rallied at different times, but not in such order or with such spirit as to recover the misfortunes of the day." ("Lee's Campaign of 1781," page 278.)

In this letter to Lee, it will be seen that Greene says the First Maryland Regiment was "a little disordered," whereas, in his letter to President Huntington, he says, "Two companies were entirely disordered." In the Lee letter, he says the

regiment was ordered to "retire a few rods," and he attributes the disorder of the Second Maryland Regiment to their seeing the First fall back, whereas other reports show that the Second Regiment was disordered first; but in the Lee letter General Greene admits that Campbell's regiment, which consisted of North Carolina militia, got disordered about the same time the Maryland troops did, and hence their disorder was not caused by the latter. In neither of the reports cited did Greene credit his defeat to the orders given by Colonel Gunby, nor ascribe the disorder to him. In both reports he states that the Marylanders rallied several times. It is quite strange that he does not mention the death of Captain Beatty, which was undoubtedly the true cause of whatever disorder there was.

George Washington Greene, grandson of General Greene, wrote an elaborate and authoritative life of his grandfather, from which we extract the following account of the battle of Hobkirk's Hill:

"Campbell was ordered to wheel upon their right flank, Ford upon their left, Hawes and Gunby to charge in front with the bayonet, and Washington to pass around them in the rear with the cavalry.





VIEW TAKEN FROM LEFT OF CAMDEN ROAD AND ON TOP OF HOBKIRK.

This shows Camden in the distance. Here it was that Greene gave orders to Virginians and Marylanders to form, which they did. Beatty descending from hill and leading men across Camden road to point where they broke. At the edge of woods on right is where Washington struck main body of British with his cavalry.

“But unfortunately, for the success of those maneuvers, the regiments of Campbell and Ford *were new levies, not yet trained to fire.* . . . Meanwhile the artillery had opened a brisk fire, and the regiments of Gunby and Hawes were advancing to the charge with a firm countenance. The enemy’s fire also began to grow heavy, and some companies on Gunby’s right, forgetting the order to use only their bayonets, returned it. Still they continued to advance without any other indications of disorder, but at this moment, Captain William Beatty, a favorite officer, dropped dead at the head of his company, shot through the heart.

“The company became deranged and the confusion quickly extending to that nearest it, both fell out of line. The other companies were still advancing, and had the rear companies been pressed forward at quick time, the onward impulse might have been preserved, and all yet have gone well; but instead of pushing them all forward, Gunby ordered them to fall back to the foot of the hill and form there anew. The order was fatal. ‘We are commanded to retreat,’ said one to the other, and the enemy pressing eagerly forward, the whole regiment gave way. Williams, Gunby, Howard,

honored and revered as they were, could do nothing to allay the disorder, and the victors of Cowpens and almost victors of Guilford yielded to a sudden panic and broke. Before they could be rallied again, the day was lost." (G. W. Greene's "Life of Natl. Greene," Vol. 3, p. 247.)

It will be seen that this account correctly ascribes the "derangement" to the dramatic fall of Captain Beatty. What it says of Colonel Gunby's fatal order and the subsequent panic, is wholly inaccurate, and wholly unreasonable and inconsistent, as will be shown further along. All historians concur in attributing the disorder to the death of Beatty, and many attribute the defeat entirely to this cause. For instance, Lossing states the matter as follows :

"Notwithstanding their inferiority of numbers and disadvantage of position, the British maintained their ground most gallantly until Gunby's charge, when they faltered. Hawes was then descending the hill to charge the New York Volunteers, and the falchion that should strike the decisive blow of victory for the Americans was uplifted. At that moment, some of Gunby's veterans gave way. Their commander was killed. Colonel

Williams, who was near the center, endeavored to rally them, and Gunby and other officers used every exertion to close their lines. In this attempt, Colonel Ford was mortally wounded and carried to the rear. Gunby, finding it impossible to bring them into order, directed them to rally by returning partially to the rear. The fall of Captain Beatty of Gunby's regiment was the cause of its defection. He was leading a battalion of Gunby's command to a bayonet charge when a musket ball entered his forehead and he fell dead. To save him from the British bayonets, then close at hand, the officers, not knowing that he was killed, rushed forward to pick him up. This produced a halt and some confusion. The British perceived it, pushed forward, broke the line of the battalion and caused a general retreat. To the fall of the brave Beatty must be attributed the loss of victory to the Americans." (Lossing's "American Revolution and War of 1812," pp. 473 and 475.)

I have no doubt that the death of this gallant young captain, who was as athletic as he was brave, and as brave as he was intelligent and patriotic, was a great shock to his companions, especially as he was leading the extreme right of the regiment,

where the regimental colors were; but it is too much to say that his death caused the loss of the battle, even indirectly. But if Lossing is right, if the death of Beatty caused an uncontrollable panic in this veteran regiment, then the disorder was due to causes over which Gunby had no control, and he is clearly exonerated from all blame. This, however, would throw the blame on the First Maryland Regiment, a result with which I am not satisfied. I propose to show that the responsibility for the defeat rests neither on the regiment nor its commander. Here is another account of the causes which led to the defeat:

“Perceiving that the British advanced with a narrow front, Greene ordered Ford’s regiment on the left and Campbell’s on the right to wheel respectively on their flanks, the regiments of Hawes and Gunby to charge with bayonets without firing, and, with *inconsiderate confidence* in gaining the victory, weakened himself *irretrievably* by sending William Washington with his cavalry to double the right flank and attack the enemy in the rear. . . . The regiments under Hawes and Gunby advanced with courage, while the artillery played effectively on the head of the British column. But, on the



SCENE OF GREENE'S HEADQUARTERS.

Between the four trees this tent was pitched. Large tree on right was standing at that time. This is directly on top of Hobkirk and about 200 yards from bluff overlooking Camden. The road from Camden is visible on left.

100

right of Gunby's regiment, *Captain Beatty*, an officer of the greatest spirit, fell mortally wounded; *his company, left without his lead, began to waver*, and the wavering affected the next company. Seeing this, Gunby ordered the regiment to retire, that they might form again. The British troops, seizing the opportunity, broke through the American center, advanced to the summit of the ridge, brought their whole force into action on the best ground, and forced Greene to retreat. The battle was over before William Washington with his cavalry could make the circuit through the forest to attack their rear. Each party lost about three hundred men." (From Bancroft's "History of the United States," Vol. 5, 1776-1782, pages 498 and 499.)

It is strange that Bancroft should make such an erroneous statement with regard to Washington's part in the battle. The fact is, Washington had been eminently successful in his movement, and had reached the rear of the British army and gone as far as the Log Town marked on the map. At the moment when Greene ordered the retreat, Washington had captured two hundred prisoners, among whom were all the surgeons attached to Rawdon's army, and about fifty citizens. He lost some time

in taking paroles from these prisoners, otherwise his presence in the rear of the enemy might have been made known to Greene and encouraged him to remain on the field. It was some time before Washington found out that the Americans had retreated; then he marched around and got in front of the British, and charged and drove them back to their breast-works at Camden. It is my opinion that Washington's cavalry and the First Maryland Regiment could have alone whipped Rawdon's army, if Greene had been absent the entire day. The British historians give a humorous tinge to their account of this battle by speaking of Colonel Washington as "this remarkable gentleman who did not understand the situation, but continued to make prisoners of British officers after the main body of the Americans were in full retreat." They seem to think this was a breach of discipline on Washington's part. Landrum, in his "History of Upper South Carolina," says that Washington lured Captain Coffin, who was left by Rawdon in charge of the field, into ambush, and all but annihilated his forces; thus actually ending the day in favor of the Americans. There is also ample authority to

show that the Marylanders were hurried into the fight in a half-formed and discouraging condition.

Thus, in "McSherry's History of England," page 292, it is said: "Worn down by previous sufferings, emaciated from the scantiness of their food, and brought suddenly to a charge when only half formed, these brave men seemed to forget the laurels which they had already won. They had rallied at length, but too late to retrieve the day."

Such statements carry with them the strongest repudiation of the censure bestowed on those brave soldiers. It was not their fault that they were surprised and were suddenly hurried into a charge without adequate formation. It was not their fault that they had been taxed beyond the bounds of physical endurance, and yet ordered to charge upon an advancing foe without firing a gun. After the battle of Cowpens, Greene seemed to rely on the bayonet alone, in season and out of season. Half of his men were away on detached service. His artillery, except two pieces, was also out of the way, yet, instead of standing on the defensive on the top of Hobkirk's Hill, where he could have fought his enemy at terrible disadvantage, he

hastily ordered his disorganized forces to throw themselves against a well-formed and advancing enemy.

It was inevitable that disorder should spring from such movements, and it was due to Gunby's coolness and good judgment and military skill that Greene was not utterly routed. It will be observed that in all of the reports of this battle it is stated that Gunby's regiment was rallied, but too late to do any good. This is a grievous error. They rallied in time to save the entire American army. They rallied "in a few rods" of the position from which they fell back and reformed in time to steady the other troops. I shall now produce two reliable historians who show what valuable service Gunby's regiment rendered, even after the disorder. The first is Judge William Johnson of the United States Supreme Court, who emulated the example of his great chief, Judge Marshall, in devoting a part of his leisure and talents to American history. This great philosopher and jurist was born and reared in South Carolina, being ten years old at the time of the battle of Hobkirk's Hill, and, no doubt, as he grew up, he formed a personal acquaintance with most of the participants in it.

In his "Life and Correspondence of Nathaniel Greene," Judge Johnson says: "Greene had no common adversary to deal with in Lord Rawdon. With that promptness in conception and in action which distinguishes genius combined with bravery, the British supporting columns were instantly protruded, and the American wings were quickly exposed to the very disadvantage which they hoped to impose upon their enemy—they were outflanked, their wings were enfiladed, and their rear threatened. *Disorder necessarily followed*; for the extreme right and left were necessarily checked and deflected. But no permanent effect could have resulted from this state of things in the wings had not other occurrences produced a state of things in the center which admitted of no remedy.

"The First Maryland Regiment, the tenth legion of the army, that to which all eyes were turned for example, the same which had conquered at the Cowpens and fought half the battle at Guilford, now shrunk away in a panic which was not to be overcome.

"The *first* symptom of confusion was exhibited by the commencement of a firing contrary to orders. This was scarcely suppressed when Captain Beatty,

who led the right company of the First Maryland, and who was the delight of his command, fell pierced to the heart. *His fall* caused those nearest him to check their progress, and the halt was rapidly communicated from right to left through two companies before the cause was understood. Some hesitation being exhibited by the men when urged to regain the line Colonel Gunby *dispatched Colonel Howard* with orders to the remaining companies of the regiment, then advancing with confidence, to halt, fall back, and encourage the faltering companies to proceed. This retrograde movement soon produced a general panic in the regiment, which exhibited itself in a tendency to continue to retreat in some confusion. Nor did the evil end here. While Williams, Gunby and Howard were exhausting all their resources in a combined effort to rally this regiment, Colonel Ford, whilst gallantly executing his orders on the American left, fell from his horse, pierced with a mortal wound. His regiment, dispirited by the fall of its leader, and severed from the line by the retirement of the First Maryland, soon faltered, and could only be kept from absolute confusion by being per-

mitted to halt; to be permitted to retire was the unavoidable consequence. . . . In the midst of the flight of bullets which then showered about him, for he was then almost alone upon the most exposed part of the hill, General Greene's orders were issued in a tone of perfect composure, to draw off the right and left regiments *and form them on Gunby's regiment, which was now rallied*; while Hawes, with the Second Virginia, should cover their retreat."

The next author is William Gilmore Sims, also a South Carolinian, who says in his "Life of General Nathaniel Greene," pages 219 and 221:

"This center was composed of the very flower of the army—one of its two regiments being that of Gunby, or the First Maryland, whose conduct at Guilford had been so conspicuous for its bravery. Firing against orders was one proof of confusion, which was increased by the fall of Captain Beatty, of the right company of the regiment, who was much beloved, and who was stricken down by a bullet that pierced his heart. His fall *checked the progress of his command*. The halt influenced the other companies. It became a panic; it spread from right to left, from front to rear; and, finally,

produced the recoil of the whole regiment. Unhappily, while Williams, Gunby and Howard were exhausting themselves in the most earnest efforts to restore firmness and consistency, Colonel Ford fell, mortally wounded, while gallantly leading the other Maryland regiment on the American left. *The death of their leader, and the halt of Gunby's veteran command, determined their career. They recoiled also.*" . . . Greene's "only hope was to draw off the right and left regiments from the now unequal struggle, *and form them on the regiment of Gunby, which had now rallied*; while Hawes, with the Second Virginia, should cover the retrograde movement. The order was given and well executed."

Here it is stated by both Johnson and Sims that Greene formed the right and left regiments on Gunby's regiment. What would have become of them if Gunby's regiment had not been there? Let it be remembered that Campbell's regiment on the American right and Ford's regiment on the left were all militia, and had run at Guilford. Let it also be remembered that General Greene says himself that Campbell's regiment, which was not in sight of the Marylanders, became disordered at the

same time that the First Maryland regiment did. Let it also be remembered that Colonel Ford was killed on the top of the hill in trying to stop the confusion in his regiment of "new levies," as George Washington Greene calls them, and it will be clear that Gunby's falling back "a few rods" to re-align his forces was not the cause of the right and left wings giving way. It was extremely fortunate for Greene that Gunby had restored order in his own regiment, and had rallied his men so as to be able to check the furious onslaught of the British. If Gunby had permitted a part of his regiment to advance while two companies were in disorder, and confusion, it is easy to see that the whole army would have been routed and perhaps destroyed.

Now, I have given Greene's account of the battle and his opinion of the cause of his defeat, an opinion which has been too often flippantly and inconsiderately followed by stereotyped historians. I will proceed to give the real cause of his defeat, in the language of one of the best military authorities in the Revolutionary War. I allude to Colonel Henry Lee, known as "Light Horse Harry," whose character was in some degree a reflection of his cel-

ebred eulogy on George Washington—"First in War, First in Peace, and First in the Hearts of his Countrymen." Colonel Lee was a brilliant and successful soldier before he went to South Carolina, and General Greene warmly testified that Lee was the very ablest officer under his command. Belonging to the most distinguished families of Virginians, and a graduate of Princeton College, he combined with learning and noble lineage the utmost daring and skill, and his "Legion" became famous throughout the world. In 1809, General Lee wrote his "Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States," an able and successful work, the third edition of which was revised and published by General Robert E. Lee, the illustrious son of the author, in 1868, at Lexington, Virginia. As already stated, Lee was not at Hobkirk's Hill, but was engaged at the time in a successful attack on Fort Watson, winning a decisive victory there for the Americans. This detracts nothing from the zest and reliability of his work.

Lee says: "That General Greene exhibited an imprudent confidence in detaching Washington's force before the action began to develop itself from the support of his own army upon an extensive

circuit against the British rear. Had this formidable officer been at hand when Gunby's regiment failed, the consequent advance of the enemy would have been checked, the rallying of that regiment facilitated and the victory secured."

This goes to the root of the question, and it will be seen from the following extract that Lee repudiates the idea that Gunby's order was a blunder :

"The First Regiment of Maryland, as has been mentioned, deservedly held up to the army as its model, and which upon all preceding occasions behaved well (it was this regiment which forced the Guards at the battle of Guilford Court House, killing their commandant, and driving them back, seeking shelter under cover of the British artillery ; and a portion of the same regiment constituted a part of the infantry which, under Howard, gave us the victory at the Cowpens by the free use of the bayonet), *now shrank from the conflict, abandoning their general*, their country and their comrades ; this, too, in defiance of *the efforts and example* of Williams, Gunby and Howard, all dear to the troops, and when the British line, so far from having gained any advantage, was beginning to stagger under the combined operation fast bearing upon it.

It is true that Captain Beatty, commanding the company on the right, fell at this moment; and it is also true that Colonel Gunby, with a view of bringing the regiment to range with its colors, ordered it to fall back to the right of the company; but *Morgan had given the same order, at the Cowpens, to the corps of Howard, which was not only executed with promptitude, but was followed by its decisive advance and consequent signal success.*

“Relinquishing an investigation which does not promise a satisfactory solution, I cannot but observe that the battle of Hobkirk adds to the many evidences with which military history abounds of the deranging effects of unlimited confidence. It is the only instance in Greene’s command where this general implicitly yielded to its delusive counsel, and he suffered deeply in consequence of it; for had he for a moment doubted the certainty of success, the cavalry would not have been detached in the rear until the issue of the battle had begun to unfold itself.” (From Lee’s “Memoirs of the War,” page 340.)

We cannot doubt the high value of this authority. The impartiality and ability of Colonel Lee cannot be questioned, and his high standing in social,

political and military circles give his work unequaled weight; and his military opinions were approved by Robert E. Lee, one of the greatest military chieftains and ablest tacticians of the world, who placed the seal of his great name upon this work. Lee says that Gunby's orders to bring his regiment in range with their colors was not an error, and cites as a precedent for Gunby's order the similar order given by Morgan at Cowpens, which was executed and followed by signal success. Howard, as we have seen, was particularly proud of the execution of his order to fall back at the Cowpens. Now, it must appear to any reasonable mind that if Gunby made an error at Hobkirk, then Morgan and Howard made the same error at the Cowpens; but Greene, the commander, did not condemn this maneuver at the Cowpens, nor at Guilford Court House, when Gunby ordered his men to face clear around and charge to the rear to meet a new foe. No matter if it did prove fortunate, Greene should have warned his officers against its repetition if it was unmilitary. This he did not do, but when surprised at Hobkirk, and chagrined at his own neglect, he readily threw

blame on Gunby for following precedents so recent and so brilliant.

To recapitulate, I have quoted Judge Marshall to show that Campbell's and Ford's troops were disordered before the Marylanders fell back and that it was the general confusion of these troops that led Greene to save his forces for a more auspicious occasion. I have shown by Sims and Johnson that the re-alignment and steadying of Gunby's regiment proved a fortunate thing for Greene, as it enabled him to form his broken militia on this firm regiment. I have shown by Moultrie and others that Greene was completely surprised and his men were marched to battle in a half-formed condition; and to crown all this, I have shown by Lee that the loss of the battle was due to Greene's bad judgment in sending his cavalry away on a wild goose chase. I have also shown by Lee that the order given by Gunby for the advanced companies of his regiment, to range themselves with the colors, so far from being a blunder, was a correct and judicious order, which restored perfect formation to his gallant regiment and saved Greene from total route. My friend, Armand Hawkins of New Orleans, has in his wonderful collection of arts,

antiques and relics, a splendid silk flag which was presented to General Greene by the ladies of New Jersey and used by him in all his battles. The motto stitched across its ample folds is "Stand by your colors." With such a motto Greene should have been the last to censure an attempt to keep the regiment in line with its colors. That was the way to steady and enthuse the regiment and prepare it to repel the reckless charge of the over-confident foe. This was effected. The whole regiment was formed in a line in perfect order, and if Greene could have held his other troops for a short time the tide of battle would have been turned by the Marylanders, as it was at Cowpens.

The fact is that Greene was disconcerted by the sudden appearance of the enemy. His position on Hobkirk Hill was formidable, and might have been held by proper tactics against a much larger force than Rawdon commanded. The historian Botta says there were entrenchments on the top of the hill. This, I think, is doubtful. There should have been entrenchments, but without them the position was almost impregnably strong if vigilantly guarded. Greene only had to keep his army still and await the approach of the foe. This would have

given him great advantage ; but his fondness for the bayonet, after it proved successful at Cowpens, caused him to order his troops to abandon all their advantages of position and march down the hill to meet a charging foe. This, too, when his troops were half formed and necessarily ruffled by the suddenness of the attack. Why could he not act on the defensive, as Rawdon had when Greene appeared before the ramparts of Camden? It actually seems that Greene was in a hurry to charge upon the enemy for fear they would retire before he got a chance at them. Suppose that Meade's army at Gettysburg had forsaken Cemetery Ridge and charged down the hill to meet Pickett's men. What a foolish move it would have been !

I feel that I have not only completely exonerated Colonel Gunby from all blame, but have shown that he and his regiment were the heroes of this battle, as they were at Guilford Court House, truly the tenth legion of the American cause, the bulwark of every battle in which they participated.

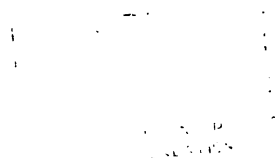
I cannot close this chapter without saying something more of the brave Captain Beatty, who died for his country at Hobkirk's Hill. No truer patriot,

no braver soldier, ever offered himself as a sacrifice on the altar of freedom. Liberally educated, with bright prospects of advancements in other lines of activity, he chose the hardships and perils of war, and at the early age of twenty-four saw his noble life go out. I present herewith a photograph of the spot where Beatty fell. This scene is taken from the top of Hobkirk's Hill, and Camden may be seen in the distance. Beatty was leading his men from the right toward the left, and was just crossing the road when he was shot. It is to be hoped that this spot may some day be marked by a fitting monument erected to the memory of this noble soldier. The place is now a part of Colonel Canty's farm, and near the spot where Beatty fell his sword or rapier was dug up in 1899, and may now be seen at Camden. I present a photograph of this interesting relic. It still shows marks of having been very beautiful. On the hand shield are carved scenes of primitive American life, and in many places the heavy gold plate is just as bright as ever. Around the handle are two bands of silver chain, neatly interwoven and perfect in design. This rapier is thirty inches in length.

Beatty was a hero, and full, though tardy, honor must be done to him by all Americans, for we must not forget that the self-devotion and heroism of men like him constitute the true glory and best wealth of America.



SWORD FOUND TWO YEARS AGO ON COLONEL CANTY'S PLACE
NEAR CAMDEN.



CHAPTER VII.

THE COURT OF INQUIRY.

Charles Botta, the distinguished classical Italian historian, the contemporary of Washington and LaFayette, says, in reference to the battle of Hobkirk's Hill, "Greene endeavored to repair the negligence of which he felt culpable." One of the ways in which his chagrin found vent was in charging that Colonel Gunby had caused the loss of the battle. Some historians state that General Greene ordered a Court of Inquiry, and sent Colonel Gunby before it. This is a misstatement, as admitted by G. W. Greene. Colonel Gunby asked for a Court of Inquiry, and it was granted by General Greene. The battle took place on Wednesday, the 25th of April, 1781. On Saturday, the 28th, in camp at Rugeley's Mill, General Greene appointed General Huger, Colonel Harrison, of the artillery, and Lieutenant-Colonel Washington, of the cavalry, to "compose a court to inquire into the conduct of Colonel Gunby in the action of the 25th inst.," and

on the following Wednesday, May 2d, this Court made the following report :

“The Court, whereof Brigadier-General Huger is president, appointed to inquire into the conduct of Colonel Gunby, in the action of the 25th ultimo, report as follows, namely :

“It appears to the Court that Colonel Gunby received orders to advance with his regiment and charge bayonet without firing. This order he immediately communicated to his regiment, which advanced cheerfully for some distance, when a firing began on the right of the regiment, and in a short time became general through it. That soon after two companies on the right of the regiment gave way. That Colonel Gunby then gave Lieutenant-Colonel Howard orders to bring off the other four companies, which at that time appeared disposed to advance, except a few. That Lieutenant-Colonel Howard brought off the four companies from the left and joined Colonel Gunby at the foot of the hill, *about sixty yards in the rear*. That Lieutenant-Colonel Howard there found Colonel Gunby actively exerting himself in rallying the two companies that broke from the right, which he effected, and the regiment was again formed and gave a fire or two at the

enemy, which appeared on the hill in front. It also appeared, from other testimony, that Colonel Gunby, at several other times, was active in rallying and forming his troops.

“It appears, from the above report, that Colonel Gunby’s spirit and activity were unexceptionable. But his order for the regiment to retire, which broke the line, was extremely improper and unmilitary, and, in all probability, the only cause why we did not obtain a complete victory.” (From Scharf’s “History of Maryland,” Vol. II., 1765–1812, pages 418 and 419.)

It will be seen that the Court pays the highest tribute to the “spirit and activity of Colonel Gunby,” but finds that he committed an error of judgment, or to be more precise, an error in military tactics. This report, made almost in the heat of battle, made in camp without consultation of authorities, made when the commanding general and his officers were smarting under the sting of defeat, is the completest possible exoneration and vindication of Colonel Gunby from any misconduct or failure of duty and zeal. Considering the circumstances and the natural incentive to find a “scape-goat” to burden with the responsibility and shame of defeat, it is

remarkable that those officers spoke so highly of Gunby in their report. If historians would read this report before writing, they would be compelled to acknowledge the compliment paid a deserving officer in a most trying ordeal. They would also correct their statements with regard to the "panic" and "flight" of the Maryland Regiment, for this report shows there was nothing of the sort, nor was there any confused retreat and alarm by the soldiers at Gunby's order, as some narrators erroneously state. Colonel Howard executed the "order" of Gunby, and he brought off the four companies in good order. General Greene admits this in his report to Congress. Gunby did not give this order to the four remaining companies. Howard gave it. If it was misunderstood for an order to retreat, Howard was to blame: but it was not so misunderstood. Howard did his full duty, and well, in the battle, and no blame has attached to him. Yet, if there was blame, it must fall on Howard. Gunby did not give an order to retreat nor to retire. His order was to fall back and form on the "colors." This is precisely what the regiment did. Instead of flight, the Court says they fell back (Greene says "a few rods") about sixty yards, and joined Gunby

at the foot of the hill, and when he had rallied and reformed the two disordered companies; thus, a falling back of a hundred and eighty feet at most has been described as a disorderly flight which caused the loss of the day. This is so absurd that it does not require an answer. It would certainly bring military operations and military science into contempt if a regiment's falling back "a few rods" and restoring its order and alignment could have such an effect. That the regiment was not panic-struck is shown by the Court's statement that "the regiment was again formed and gave a fire or two at the enemy." They were not rattled, nor their spirits broken.

As to the two companies that, it is said, "broke from the right," we know full well that their confusion and disorder was due to the death of Captain Beatty and their half-formed condition on entering the battle. Nobody has ever charged that Colonel Gunby was responsible for their confusion. It was beyond his power to foresee or prevent what occurred when Beatty fell, as it was to prevent the fall Beatty. The Court did not blame Gunby for the conduct of these two companies which he rallied as quickly as possible. They blame him for ordering

Howard to bring back the other four companies in line with their colors. The Court expresses the opinion that this order was "in all probability the only cause why we did not gain a complete victory."

As we have seen, this opinion is not concurred in by Light Horse Harry Lee, who was certainly superior as a military authority to any member of the Court of Inquiry. Colonel Lee was disinterested. The members of the Court of Inquiry were all interested in throwing the responsibility for defeat on other shoulders than their own. They also had an interest in pleasing their disappointed general. The Court does not state why Gunby's order was unmilitary, nor why in their opinion it produced such unhappy results. Their opinion is simply the brief announcement of a foregone conclusion. It is not in keeping with all the facts of the battle which we now know was lost on account of other ample causes than that assigned by the Court. Nor is it in keeping with sound reason, for, if Gunby had not issued his order, the advancing companies would soon have felt the absence of the two companies on their right, and confusion and disaster would have followed. We also know that the re-

formation of Gunby's regiment acted like an anchor for the restoration of order to the other regiments which threatened disorderly flight. It was not fair for the Court to omit mention of these facts, nor was it fair nor true for the Court to assume that the battle was lost when Gunby's regiment reformed sixty yards to the rear. The Marylanders were not whipped then; like John Paul Jones on the *Bon-Homme Richard*, they "had just begun to fight." With Washington in the rear of the British, as he was at that moment, and the Marylanders in front of them, the battle was not lost. It would never have been lost, if Greene had not prematurely and precipitately ordered a retreat, as usual. It is evident that the Court took none of these things into consideration. It is also evident that they did not sufficiently distinguish between the disorder of the two companies and the falling back of the other four companies "in range with their colors." It is apparent that they sought to blame Gunby with the former as well as with the latter movement.

Lee gives good reason for his opinion in favor of Gunby's wisdom, by citing the precedent at the Cowpens. He might have found in ancient history other apt illustrations of the wisdom of a "feigned

retreat," and a falling back, or retiring, even in the face of the enemy, in order to present a more solid front. He could also have found plenty of authority to show that soldiers are not disconcerted nor broken by a falling back a short distance. Even soldiers who are panicky and in full retreat can be brought back into good order by an able general, as was done by Washington at Monmouth. One of the most signal illustrations of this military principle occurred during the American civil war, at the first battle of Manassas, on July 21, 1861. In the early part of that famous fight, four regiments, under the command of General Bee and Colonel Bartow, encountered and held back a largely superior force, on disadvantageous grounds, until General Bee ordered them to fall back to a better position; but, in falling back before overwhelming odds, an unaccountable panic seized the men, and they fled in confusion for twelve hundred yards. They were at length rallied and brought back into the field by the herculean efforts of Bee and Bartow. It was during this struggle to rally his men that General Bee pointed them to the Virginia brigade ~~and said~~ : "There stands Jackson like a stone wall," giving birth to the most celebrated military

soubriquet of modern times. Bee's men were rallied, and did good service on the plateau around the Henry house, though Bee and Bartow both lost their lives, and the spots where they fell, a few yards from each other, are still marked on the battlefield. I could cite many other instances where soldiers have been confused, disordered or stampeded, yet have been rallied and won the day. Equally numerous instances will occur to every military student where soldiers have been ordered to fall back, either through necessity, or as a matter of strategy, to gain a better position, or to form a more perfect organization or line of battle. It is nonsense for this hasty and excited Court of Inquiry to rule otherwise.

In the light of military experience, the numerous authorities cited, and the facts and circumstances which we know, but which were unknown to the Court of Inquiry, we are justified in concluding that Colonel Gunby's order to Lieutenant-Colonel Howard to bring back the advancing companies to a line with the colors, whether judged from the standpoint of necessity, strategy, or prudence, was in the highest degree proper and military, and that

his judgment and skill, like "his spirit and activity," were unexceptionable.

It does not appear that anything further was done with this report. It was not submitted to nor approved by the commanding general. It is singular that it does not mention Colonel Williams who was near the center of the First Maryland Regiment and participated in rallying the disordered companies. This officer shortly afterwards wrote to his brother that he and many other officers were mortally mortified at the inglorious defeat at Hobkirk's. (Potter's "American Monthly," Vol. IV, page 99.)

This does not sound like they put all the blame on Gunby. It does not appear that he made any effort to appeal or carry the matter further. He regarded it simply as a difference in opinion between him and brother officers on a question of tactics, and he was too good a soldier and patriot to dispute about opinions when war's rude alarms were all around him. Colonel Gunby was desirous to so act as to disarm prejudice against the Marylanders, which Greene exhibited, as shown by his papers and letters: "Maryland has given no assistance to this army. Not a recruit has joined us

from that state, and we are discharging her men daily, their time of service being expired." (Letter of May 4, 1781, from Wm. Johnson's "Life of Greene," page 88.)

In the face of these unjust censures, Gunby did not sulk like Achilles in his tent, but volunteered to go upon a difficult and important duty of recruiting the fast thinning ranks, quietly but vigorously discharging his duties until the close of the war. At the conclusion of the war, as Greene was passing through Baltimore, the citizens waited on him and presented him with a congratulatory and eulogistic address. He made a deliberate and studied reply, and I don't think it is possible to frame a more unanswerable reply to the unjust charges against Gunby and the First Maryland Regiment. Here is what he said:

"BALTIMORE, *September 30, 1783.*

"*Gentlemen*—Nothing can be more welcome than your kind congratulations upon my return, or anything more flattering to the feelings of a soldier than your sentiments of the Southern operations. Every opportunity of expressing my obligations to the officers and troops of this state affords me the

highest satisfaction. They have been companions with me in the hours of adversity, and have greatly contributed to all our little successes. Your professions of respect and generous wishes for my happiness excite the most lively emotions of a grateful mind, and I beg leave to offer my warmest acknowledgments upon this occasion, and to add my good wishes for the prosperity and happiness of this town.

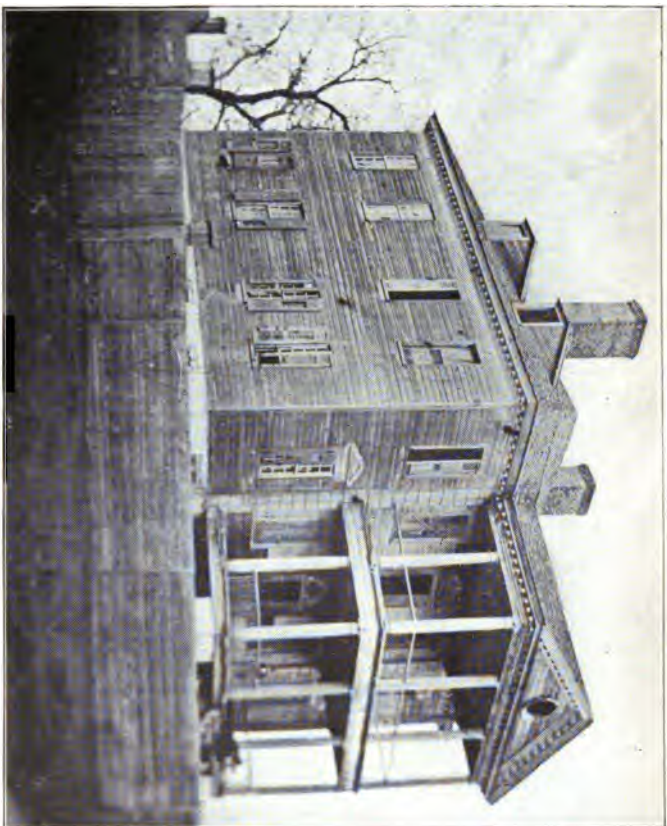
“I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your most obedient and humble servant,

NATHANIEL GREENE.”

(Reply to citizens of Baltimore, from Scharf’s “Chronicles of Baltimore,” page 212.)

General Greene knew better than any one else the full extent of his obligations to the officers and troops of Maryland, and after this frank and unreserved acknowledgment it seems a shame that any historian should perpetuate the ill tempered and inconsiderate charges after the battle of Hobkirk’s Hill, at least without their just and signal refutation. After the fall of Yorktown, Colonel Gunby passed through Camden on his way home, and remained there a week, visiting and examining every

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CORNWALLIS HOUSE.

Occupied by Cornwallis, Rawdon and Tarleton. Gundy entertained here after Revolution. This building was destroyed by Sherman during Civil War.

portion of the battle ground. While there he was fêted or given a reception by the citizens of Camden in the Cornwallis House, a view of which is herewith presented.

This famous house was occupied by Cornwallis, and afterwards by Rawdon as headquarters, and Greene also occupied it for a while. It stood until the late civil war, when it was destroyed by General Sherman. At the reception given in his honor Gunby made a speech, the only one in his life, in which he referred to the battle on the 25th of April, 1781, its origin, incidents and results. He claimed that the day ended in an American victory, and this was due to a misunderstanding between Lord Rawdon and a deserter from the American army who reached Camden on the morning of the 25th. This deserter, being questioned as to the success of an attack, replied: "If you go out from the east side of the town, following along the edge of the marsh until you reach the second fork of the run, then up to its source, you will find that you are in Greene's rear, thus cutting off his retreat and prevent the joining of the forces which are scattered over two miles square."

This plan failed owing to the fact that Rawdon's

men counted as the first fork of the branch a swale flowing from a near-by spring. Arriving at what they supposed to be the second branch, they ascended to its head and marched directly into the camp of Kirkwood and his Delawares, striking their front, not, as supposed, their rear. Here the fighting began; this small body of men holding the British in check until Greene could collect his scattered forces and present a formidable front. Another section of Rawdon's army left Camden by the Waxhaw road, which runs directly through the battlefield. It was this body of men that Washington's cavalry attacked as they were pushing forward to co-operate with the forces supposed by that time to be in Greene's rear. This was a deep laid and bold scheme, which nearly proved a success. Gunby stated that he successfully executed his efforts to calm the disordered portion of his men, whose momentary confusion he attributed to the surprise and suddenness of the attack, to Beatty's death, and to heavy firing on the left of the Americans, who were forbidden to fire. The reason why he ordered the first line to fall back was because it was far in advance of the second line, and directly between the two sections of the British

army, which were then in sight of each other and intending to join forces. These two forces supposed they had been duped by the deserter and were determined to join forces. Besides the Irish Volunteers, Rawdon's favorite regiment, which he had raised and equipped in New York, were charging down upon the left flank of the Americans with renewed vigor. Discovering this state of affairs, that the enemy at that moment was all but in the rear of the left of his regiment, and the ground in front was marshy and had not been reconnoitered, Gunby said he deemed it best, if not absolutely necessary, to have the advancing companies, which were already in advance of all the other Americans, to fall back and range themselves with the two companies that had been checked and disconcerted by the death of Beatty, so as to present a solid front to the oncoming enemy. Gunby said that his orders, which had been misunderstood, turned out fortunately in the end. He said that they were surprised by the attack of the British, which occurred before the Americans had time to pitch their tents.

Although there is no written record of this reception and speech of Colonel Gunby, it is one of

the treasured traditions of the people of Camden, a city which has not much to excite its thoughts, except the scenes of its stirring past. Hobkirk Inn, with much of beauty in its environment, affords a fit setting for these martial traditions in which Gunby's reception pre-eminently figures. It is worthy of remark that these good people, who were the contemporaries of the battle, had nothing but words of commendation for Colonel Gunby, and so had all his brother officers and his men, who with one according voice acclaimed his intrepidity, integrity and cool, sound judgment in time of peril.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

Having demonstrated that Gunby and his Marylanders achieved and received the highest honors of war, it remains for us to follow him through the days and victories of peace, "No less renowned than those of war."

The last official arrangement of the Maryland line made in 1783, after the termination of the war, shows John Gunby as Colonel of the First Regiment, and Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Adams as succeeding in command of Second. His army commission dated August 1, 1779. (See "Maryland Archives," Vol. 18, pages 363 and 476.) As we have seen, he was promoted from Captain to Colonel of the Seventh Maryland Regiment, and then to Colonel of the Second, and then to Colonel of the First Maryland, all these changes signifying, as I am informed by the War Department at Washington, promotions on account of merit. At all times he was held to be an officer worthy in every respect

of the able corps he commanded. Shortly after the close of the war, he was given the title of Brigadier-General, but I have been unable to find by what authority. He was an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati for the State of Maryland, and in the minutes of that society for July 5, 1784, I find the following entry: "Brigadier-General Gunby, present."

There is no warrant for the assumption that this grave and dignified society entered a mere complimentary title on its pages. The minutes of the meeting of the Cincinnati, February 4, 1830, at the residence of General Samuel Smith, in Baltimore, contains the following:

"Mr. George Handy then nominated as a candidate to be balloted for, at the next annual meeting of the Society, Mr. John Gunby, eldest son of General John Gunby, an original member." It may be remarked that this candidate was duly elected and took his seat July 4, 1831.

At the time of John Gunby's death, the newspapers spoke of him as General Gunby. For example, "The Republican Star," or "Eastern Shore General Advertiser," published in Talbot County, June 8, 1807, contains the following notice: "Died,

on the 27th ult., at his farm near Snow Hill, General John Gunby, in the sixty-third year of age. This gentleman early embarked in the cause of his country during the late war which ended in the independence of the United States, and from almost the commencement to the close of the conflict with Great Britain, he was an officer of distinguished rank, activity and zeal in the services." This is certainly good evidence that John Gunby was well and widely known under the title of General. His grandson, E. K. Willson, United States Senator from Maryland, records in the "Congressional Directory" that his mother was a daughter of General John Gunby. Senator Willson also had the title of General inscribed on his grandfather's tombstone. From all this evidence, extending from 1784 until after his death, I am justified in the conclusion that the rank of Brigadier-General was justly conferred upon him by the proper authority at the close of the Revolutionary War.

As far as tradition has preserved the personal traits of John Gunby, we know that he was six feet and two inches tall, gaunt, high cheek bones, sandy hair and beard, and gray eyes. He had a rugged and brusque manner and a slight impediment of

speech. He was exceedingly reticent, cared little for society, had many friends, but was by choice a recluse, as far as it was possible to be. He sedulously refrained from politics and all connection with public positions. His father died in 1788, and bequeathed to him a large but not valuable farm in Worcester county, two miles south of the town of Snow Hill. His farm must have been chiefly marsh, for there are of record numerous prayers of its occupant for right of drainage, etc.

Here, in 1796, he built, on what is now known as the Gunby farm, the comfortable home in which he died, of which I herewith present a sketch. This building is a masterpiece in every respect. The walls are of red brick, on which the date 1796 is stamped. It has two stories and a garret. The hall of the first floor is fifteen by fifty feet, surmounted in the center by a large, imposing arch, with a stairway on the right commencing about fifteen feet from the main entrance. On this floor are two rooms, twenty by twelve, plain but exceedingly attractive and commodious. The second floor corresponds with that below it with the exception of a small room at the end of the hall. The house is powerfully constructed and still sound and useful,



RESIDENCE OF GUNBY.

Erected in 1796, on Virginia Road, two miles south of Snow Hill, Maryland.



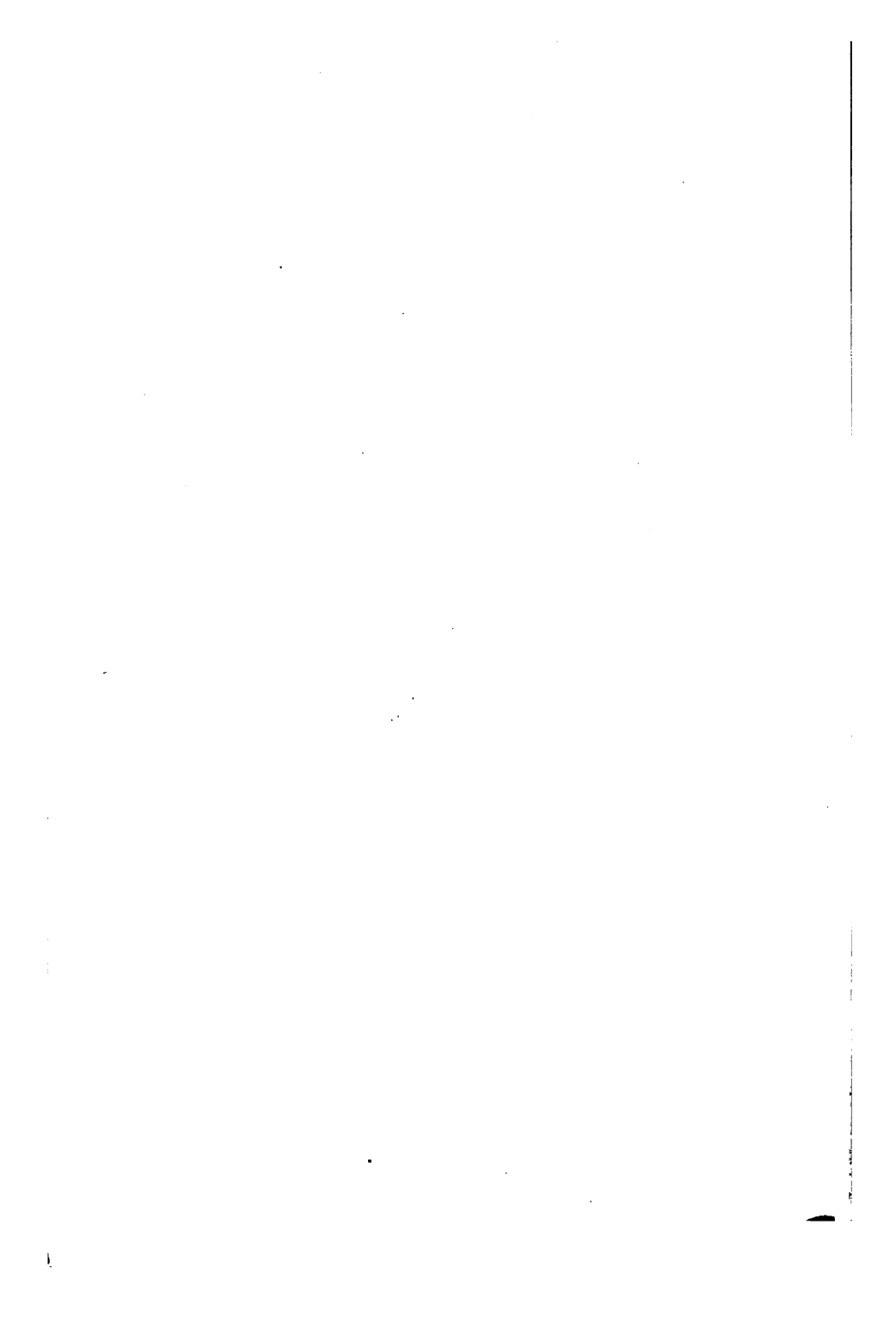
though, I am sorry to say, it is now used for a barn or granary, showing a decided lack of taste and perception on the part of its present owners. In this house, John Gunby spent the last ten years of his life, supremely devoted to the operations of agriculture. But, while absorbed in private pursuits, his spirit of philanthropy was not idle. For some years he maintained at his own expense three families of officers killed during the campaigns in South Carolina. Tradition says that one of these families was named Windor and another was named Cole. He was also largely interested in financially and morally promoting many meritorious projects, such as opening and constructing new roads, erecting houses for poor people and awaiting their convenience for payment, furnishing teams free of expense to those in need, and largely contributing to the maintenance of places of worship. It is not known that he ever built a church, but his son, Dr. John Gunby, erected a Presbyterian Church at Stockton, eight miles from Snow Hill, known as Gunby Memorial Church, an act of sublime filial reverence and devotion. In fact, John Gunby was a universal benefactor in the community in which he lived, meeting all the exigencies of life with per-

fect judgment, ease and fortitude. His life in peace was just what we would expect from a brave, modest, unselfish and distinguished soldier who never sought prominence, but fought solely for love of country and freedom. The heavy responsibilities of that death struggle had worn out the ardors of ambition, and, like his great commander-in-chief, he loved and longed for the quiet and wholesome and congenial enjoyment and exercise of domestic life on the farm. Some of the leading soldiers of the Revolution were forced into political life, and long kept there by their admiring fellow-citizens, and these are the ones for the most part whose deeds as soldiers and statesmen are blazoned on the pages of history. But there were other soldiers of the highest merit whose preference was for a life of absolute retirement. Sometimes it was because they were misunderstood and did not possess the secret of popular favor; sometimes it was because of financial stress and poverty, which enforced a life of economy, frugality and thrift, inconsistent with the demands of public office; but oftenest, I think, this stern refraining from all public activity was due to a feeling that all other causes were trivial and inconsequential compared with the great cause

they had fought for and won. The great tragedy in which they took a leading part had closed. Like the calm of nature after a great convulsion, they desired rest and composure. It was the hush of great souls conscious of a lofty destiny, waiting while the universe passed verdict on their great achievements, unmixed with the lesser deeds or impurities of smaller ambitions. It was one of those great silences of which Carlisle speaks as being infinitely ennobling. It was not exaltation; it was not vanity nor gloom; it was a profound sense of the mightiness of the events through which they had passed, and the awe-inspiring anxiety for the result. Perhaps we can never realize the feelings with which the survivors of the Revolution contemplated their work. A thinly-settled, narrow strip of country along the shores and rivulets of the Atlantic Ocean had established the liberties of a continent and founded a new order of government. The immensity of the work was staggering even then, much more so now, when viewed through all the calcium lights of one hundred and twenty years. The old government overturned by the people! the "pride of heraldry and the boast of power" destroyed! the stone which the builders rejected be-

come the chief of the corner! And all this the work of a few leaders, and the worst equipped and most impoverished soldiery the world ever saw. The thought of it makes the blood tingle now. How it must have thrilled the inmost recesses of the souls of the successful actors in that tremendous conflict who were awed and oppressed with the thought, would it turn out well!

Well might the most fortunate of mortals envy the heroic Gunby the gracious and prosperous quietude of these later years, spent in congenial pursuits beneath the skies of the state he loved so well, near the beautiful bay on which he was born, and not far from the mouth of the Potomac, on which lived Washington, his great exemplar, as a soldier, as a citizen and as a farmer. It is pleasing to know that he enjoyed the esteem of his neighbors and the plaudits of all his comrades in arms. Most happily General Greene had withdrawn all censure from the officers and men of Maryland, and had acknowledged most warmly his obligations to their valor and efficiency on all occasions. Greene, too, had paid the debt of nature, falling an unfortunate victim as early as 1785 to the labors and exposures of the plantation presented to him by the





GRAVE OF GUNBY, WIFE AND SON.

Erected by E. K. Willson about 1900 on Gunby's farm near Snow Hill, Md.

Georgia legislature. This would have disarmed resentment if Gunby had felt any, which he did not. Unruffled and serene, he spent his last years filled with all that should accompany old age. As has been stated, John Gunby died May 27, 1807, on his farm near Snow Hill. He was buried in the family burial lot fifty yards north of his residence. The enclosure is surrounded by a substantial iron fence, and contains but one tombstone, which simply states that the remains of General John Gunby, his wife, Amelia, and their son, Dr. John Gunby, who died in 1886, are interred therein. This fence and stone were placed there by Senator E. K. Willson, a photograph of which is herewith presented. It will be observed that the word General is spelled with a J, as a result, I am sure, of carelessness more than ignorance on the part of the carver. The neglected condition of this graveyard is another sad commentary on the folly of the old-fashioned and affectionate custom of having private family burial grounds near the homestead. They soon fall into obscurity and decay, and are struck away by the ruthless hand of oblivion. Thus passes away the glory of this world, at last, as far as it is commemorated by graveyards and tomb-

stones, but it is the grateful task of the historian to clear away the moss and dust from these inscriptions and chisel them deeper in the minds and love of posterity, which are the best of monuments of the living and the dead.

As an humble follower of Old Mortality, I have tried to perform this pious task for a valued and able revolutionary patriot and officer and the brave Maryland men whom he led to battle. I could wish that I had performed my appointed task better, with ampler materials, wider scope and more authoritative discussion and presentation of my exalted theme. But imperfect as my work is, it has required no small labor to obtain the evidence and citations which I have given in this work. I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to J. W. Kennedy, Assistant in the Library of Congress at Washington. Combining quick intelligence with untiring energy, exhaustless patience and indomitable spirit in the search for truth, Mr. Kennedy's aid to me has been invaluable and indispensable. I also received kind attention and valuable aid from Professor Wm. Beer, Superintendent of the Howard Library at New Orleans.

I only hope that I have performed my task in a

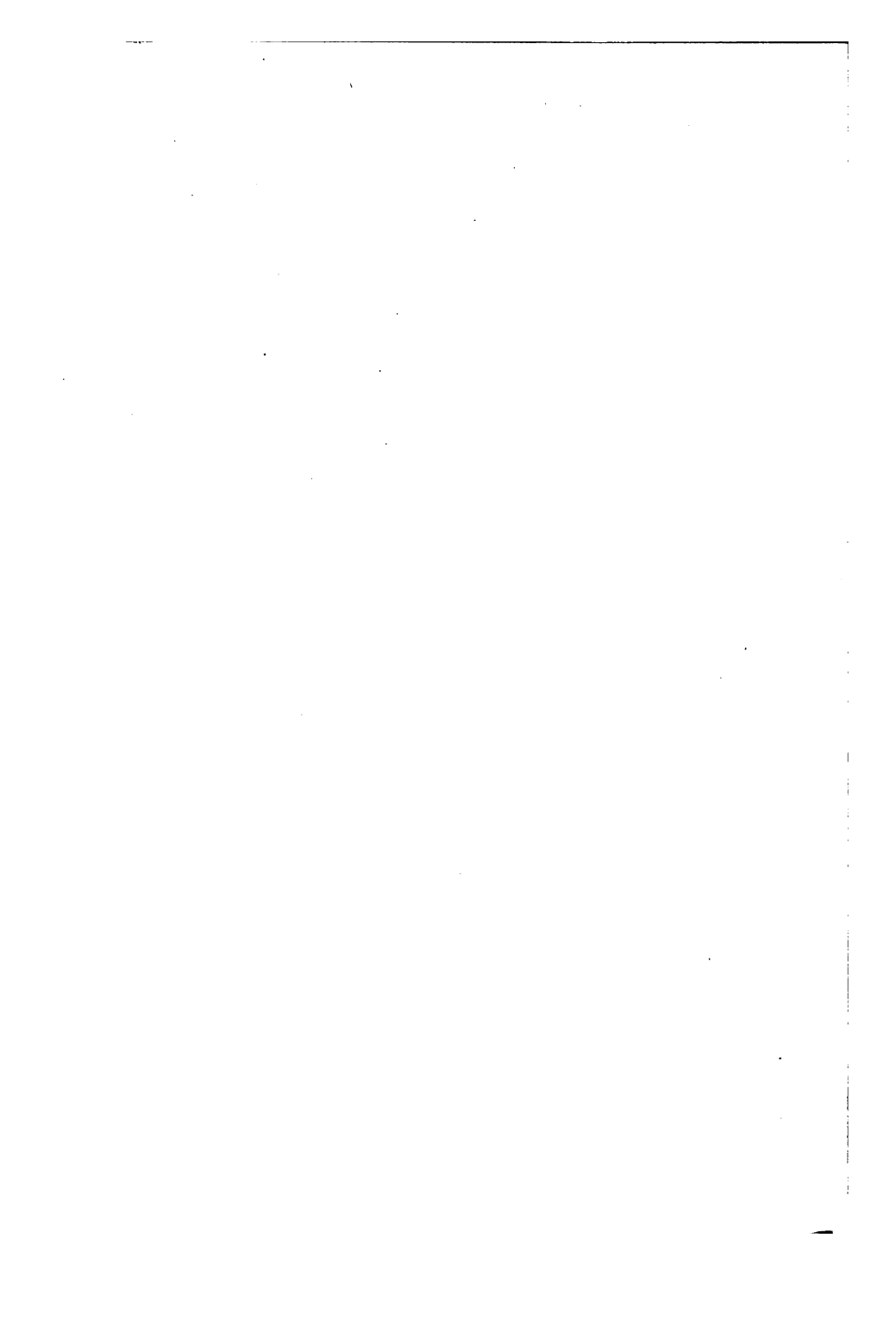
manner to give satisfaction not only to the descendants and admirers of Colonel Gunby, but to all those who feel a patriotic and growing interest in all that relates to the American revolution and the immortal men who made it, the men who gave the first birth on this earth to "government of the people, for the people and by the people." There is no man on the civilized globe who has not received a share of benefit from the work accomplished by our revolutionary sires. And the scope of that work has not yet fully appeared, for there are brilliant signs in the firmament of human affairs that it is the destiny of the Great Republic to girdle the world with free institutions and carry the blessings of freedom and enlightenment even to the downtrodden hosts that have lived so long beyond the confines of civilization. If it is not too much for me to hope, I would like to believe that my humble efforts may inspire some abler pen to celebrate the deeds of the glorious Maryland line, and all the other heroes in the mighty drama of our history, and that the love of freedom and our native land may become so interwoven with the warp and woof of our national life that the whole world shall become Americanized and

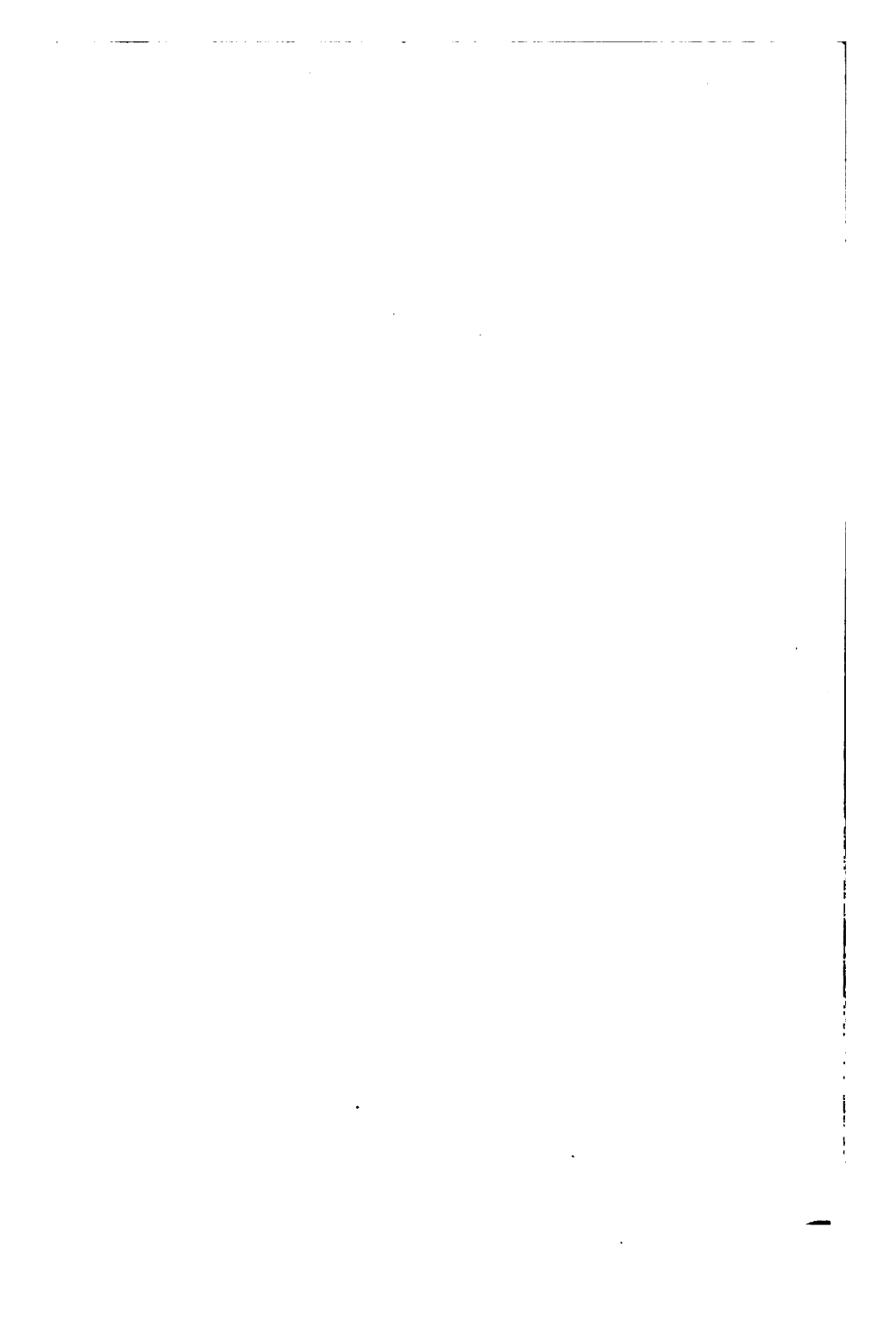
"In all lands and through all human story,
The path of duty, be the path to glory."

This memoir might be greatly extended by a book-maker, but it is long enough to teach some useful lessons. It is useful to clear up some important passages of American history. It is useful to teach that even among the subordinate leaders of the Revolution, there were examples of such great military talent, such superb manhood, magnificent courage, and immeasurable powers of endurance and self-sacrifice, that we cease to wonder at their splendid achievements. But, while our wonder is decreased, our love and veneration must be increased for our sacred champions of Freedom and Independence.



BIRTHPLACE OF JOHN GUNBY.





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